Mourning in Shakespeare: Different Aspects of Surviving Death

CHAN Lai Man

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Abstract

Death is the destination of human beings on earth. The world does not stop for the dead; yet the world changes in the eyes of those who must go on. Across cultures and times, the bereaved undergoes mourning as a means to grieve for the loss of their beloved and to pay respect to the dead. Through mourning, they also regain the power and energy that has been lost in the shock of death.

This thesis focuses on bereavement issues in Shakespeare's plays. In chapter one, the discussion is situated in Renaissance England, a time that embraces a paradox; both emotional control and passion are valued. There are social efforts to resolve this paradox; for instance, to many, moderate grief is acceptable but must be displayed with appropriate restraint. However, as chapter two of this thesis will show, there is probably no 'proper' degree of mourning for Shakespeare. Shakespeare does not deny the usefulness of social measurements of mourning as illustrated by Feste's mocking of Olivia's excessive mourning in Twelfth Night and, in Macbeth, Malcolm's advice to

Macduff to cease mourning but take up action. However, mourning is a complicated emotion and cannot be measured with a single scale. Chapter two demonstrates that long mourning is not necessarily redundant, as shown by Hamlet; short mourning is not necessarily equal to insufficiency, as in Viola's case in Twelfth Night, and even evil men can mourn, as seen in the wicked Macbeth.

A more specific social aspect of mourning, gender, will also be focused on in this thesis. In chapter three, examples of different Shakespeare characters will synthesize some unexpected phenomena. While the gender order in a patriarchal society allocates power to males, nonetheless, in bereavement, females are empowered to grieve and mourn (for example, Paulina in The Winter's Tales, Margaret in Henry VI and the Duchess of Gloucester in Richard II) while males' grief is not generally accepted unless it is related to nationalism; yet females' 'empowered' mourning also has its limitations and restrictions, as shown by the Duchess of Gloucester and Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing. Moreover, while tears remain a powerful tool of women, they are, however, a symptom of weakness of men. Characters such as Romeo and Richard II will be examined to see how they are criticized for being too mournful. Yet, crying for the nation is a masculine act. Otherwise,

Antony would not be so much appreciated delivering the funeral oration of Julius Caesar. Two kings (Henry VI and Richard II) are also compared and contrasted to distinguish the underlying meaning of tears.

While many examples of successful and effective mourning are shown in this thesis, it is the situation of failed mourning that is the focus of its concluding chapter. In this chapter, cases of failed mourning will be examined. Moreover, these examples can be used as counter-examples to emphasize how an effective work of mourning empowers individuals in terms of a healthy mentality and psychology. This chapter ends with a detailed examination of Hamlet, to show the great importance the theme of mourning, specifically failed mourning, plays in that work. The mourning of King Lear acts as the final remark echoing the main idea of the thesis: the uniqueness of mourning and bereavement.

全文摘要

死亡是人生在世的終點。世界不會因去世的人而停止運行；但世界對那些要繼續生存的人來說卻改變了。在不同的文化和時間裡，哀悼讓喪親的人紀念失去的至親，也讓他們重整生活的能量。

這論文集中討論莎士比亞中的喪親之痛。第一單元引導讀者進入那個同樣重視情感控制和強烈情感的文藝復興時期的英國。對於當時的社會，適量克制下而表現的不過份的悲傷是可以接受的。不過，第二單元指出，其實根本就沒有所謂「適度」的哀悼。莎士比亞沒有否認社會對於哀悼的規範的有用之處，從他以第十二夜中費邊嘲笑奧莉維亞的過度的哀傷和在馬克白中莫爾康建議麥度夫化哀悼為行動可見。但是，悲傷是一種複雜的情感，是不能用劃一的規限來量度的。長時間的哀悼未必是多餘的；而短時間的哀悼也未必等於不足夠。

第三單元會集中討論一個特定的社會範疇—性別。在這單元中，莎士比亞不同的角色會編織出意想不到的現象。當父權社會的性別規律分配權力給男性的同時，在喪失親人的時候，只有女性得以哀悼的「權利」，男性不可以表現悲傷，除非是與國家有關。不過，女性哀悼的「權利」是滿有限制的。眼淚可以是女人有效的工具，不過對男人來說，除非是為國家流的，否認它代表軟弱。

這論文討論了很多有效和成功的哀悼例子，而失敗的哀悼則會是最後一個主要單元的焦點。這些反例子強調一個有效的哀悼過程對於一個人健康的精神和心理的重要。此單元會以哈姆雷特中失敗的哀悼的討論作結。最後，全文以李爾王哀悼的例子作為回應此論文的中心思想：喪親之痛以及哀悼的獨特性。

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Contents

Chapter One

Introduction

"One pain is lessened by another's anguish"

(Romeo and Juliet 1.2 45)

Mourning and grief are not unfamiliar to us because death is always close to our life and experience. On 30 August 1997, Hong Kong people, like people in other parts of the world, received the shocking news of the death of Princess Diana from injuries suffered in a car accident. Four years earlier in 1993, Hong Kong people also faced the sudden news of the death of a famous Hong Kong singer, Mr. Wong Ka Kui, in a fatal fall from the stage in a game show. Ka Kui was the lead singer and the guitarist of a local band, *Beyond*, which was very much welcomed and advocated by Hong Kong people of all ages, for their songs are both encouraging and realistic. If shock and grief can be compared, the reaction to Ka Kui's death experienced by Hong Kong people perhaps was even more intense than that shown towards Diana, not because he was more famous or contributed more to the world, but simply because Ka Kui is closer to Hong Kong people and thus our lives.

This relationship between closeness and grief is the underlying 'principle' of bereavement, the state of being deprived of the beloved person by death. In her study of mourning, Theresa A. Rando (1993) writes that *bereavement* shares the same root as the word *rob*, "which implies an unwilling deprivation by force, having something withheld unjustly and injuriously, a stealing away of something valuable—all of which leave the individual victimized" (14). With this analogy, one can easily imagine the pain and grief of helplessness and passivity in the experience when the loved object is taken away violently. Martin and Doka (2000) make a further distinction that is relevant for this study; they explain that bereavement "is the basic fact or objective reality of loss, while grief refers to the person's response and reactions to the loss" (14). People mourn for the dead as an expression of love, grief and respect. So if we feel pain and grief for people like a singer and a princess, who are actually strangers to us, it is not necessary to elaborate how people react when their close family, relatives and friends pass away. We feel a need to mourn for them.

When a beloved passes away, it seems that a hole is formed in the heart. I speak from personal experience. No matter how many years pass and how many people enter my life, this hole can never be refilled and recovered,

but is pushed backward to an inner place of me. On some special occasions, for example, the anniversaries of the deceaseds' births or deaths, and even some festivals, the hole will float up again and stay close to the surface. I will still weep at their graves or when I see some familiar scenes and think of the deceased. However, the mourning is over and the feeling of loss is gone; instead, a feeling of closeness, abundance and being grown up accompany the hole. It is not hollow but carries meaning. I have accepted their deaths and have given up the emotional bonds with them; yet I have also transformed this mutual bonding into a memory and settled it somewhere in my heart by internalizing the essence of the dead with my values and beliefs.

In ancient China, Confucius (551-479 BC) taught his students to mourn for their dead parents for not less than three years as an experience of filial piety (*xiao*)[1], which is a return of love to the parents for they have raised and nursed us for at least our first three infantile years. Confucius says that this practice is "universally adopted by all under Heaven" (72) and more significantly, this is a natural reaction (which is almost close to our basic instinct) to the death of the parents. He criticizes a disciple claiming one year of mourning is enough by saying that "when a gentleman is in mourning, if he

[1] Some of Confucius' teaching were recorded in Lun Yu (Analects), which is a compilation of Confucius' oral and written transmission made by the second generation of his disciples.

eats dainties he does not relish them, and if he hears music he does not enjoy it, and if he sits in his usual place he is not at ease. That is why he abstains from these things" (72). What Confucius is saying is that mourning is not only a ritual performed for the world, but a personal heartfelt way of paying respect to the deceased. At the heart of mourning is the humaneness and benevolence of the Confucian classical ideal of the virtue of human beings, which is *ren*. Confucian teaching remains the most important school of philosophy in China even up to now, and while the practice of mourning has changed over time, the principle of *xiao* and *ren* in mourning does not change.

In the western tradition, as in the Chinese, mourning has evolved over time. In ancient Egypt, Pharaohs built pyramids for themselves to be their tombs. On one hand, these pyramids, built to serve a religious purpose, were thought to be connected to the Sun God. On the other hand, the giant building was a convenient landmark demonstrating the prestige of the dead person and perhaps, the strength and glory of their country. It is of course also an icon for mourning; it keeps reminding people of the death of the Pharaohs of Egypt.

Europe does not have pyramids for mourning, yet this does not mean that Europeans escape the prevailing power of death. Through the Middle Ages and the early modern period, death often occurred at a young age. The

high infant death rate and the short life span of people drew death close to each family. People wore black and carried out religious rituals for the mourning of the dead. Even in more modern times, such as the Victorian period, mourning remains highly significant, formalized and ritualized. Walter (1999) writes that "Victorian mourning demonstrated the respectability of your family, was a task that largely fell on women and, formally at least, had little to do with how you personally felt about the one who had died" (130). He also writes that "there were clear rules for how long you mourned a spouse, a child, a grandchild, a sibling, a parent" (130). When we come to the twentieth century, interestingly, "socially required mourning has given way to privately experienced grief" (131). Mourning no longer is seen as an obligation, but as a personal expression for inner feeling to the loss of someone beloved[2].

This thesis focuses on the nature of mourning in Renaissance England, particularly in the works of William Shakespeare. We can begin this examination of mourning by noting that in Shakespeare's time, death still threatened people despite the improvement of science and technology in the

[2] Chapter 3 will show that mourning is traditionally gender-related in the West and usually the province of women. Therefore, the recent improvement in women's status in society means they are no longer relegated to having power in mourning only. Thus the social rituals of mourning are in decline.

Renaissance. Even Shakespeare himself lost the twin, Hamnet (his only son), when the boy was only eleven years old.

Although there are certain constants in bereavement (for example it is not limited to any particular class or group of people and always involves some combination of public and private feeling), every society, as we have briefly seen, mourns in its own specific ways. In the early modern England of Shakespeare, an interesting change was occurring in the nature of mourning.

To briefly summarize, the earlier, traditionally Christian approach to mourning involved a lot of rituals and ceremonies that helped people grieve. According to these social practices, "there was constant traffic between the two worlds, with the living praying to the saints on behalf of the newly dead so that they could be assisted through purgatory as painlessly and swiftly as possible, while the dead—in the person of the saints—could in turn assist the living" (Walter 1999:32). This view of mourning allows the living and the dead to remain closely in touch and their emotional bonding does not cease. However, after Elizabeth I was crowned in 1558, Protestantism was re-affirmed as the state religion. As Richard McCoy (2001) notes, the beliefs in England were thus changed: "a growing belief in predestination, the subordination of human works to faith alone, and the abolition of purgatory and

indulgences made traditional Catholic funeral practices such as the requiem[3], the annual obit[4], and other intercessory rites and prayer unnecessary" (122). The Protestant religion reduced the extent of funeral ceremonies and banned the idea of the communication between the living and the dead through prayers. It seems that the shift from the Catholic to the Protestant approach led to mourning being more reserved, inward and internal.

Besides the change in religion, the importance of stoicism as an influential school of philosophy in the Renaissance also had a direct impact on grief and mourning. The Stoics are famous for their "forbearance in the face of adversity" or, the other side of the coin, infamous for "their ideal of the suppression of the emotions (apathy)" (Hutton 2000:53). Stoicism was an important Renaissance idea and very closely related to masculinity. Therefore, in bereavement, when men were facing the death of their beloveds, an eternal loss, they did not express their sorrowful emotion but restrained their grief.

However, the influence of Protestantism and stoicism upon mourning (factors which, in some ways, reduce its intensity) is not the whole story of Shakespeare's England. In fact, the opinions of Renaissance people

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[3] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this is "a special mass said or sung for the repose of the souls of the dead."
[4] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this is a mass "held to pray for the soul of or otherwise commemorate a deceased person on the anniversary of his or her death."

concerning mourning are kaleidoscopic. Although the Protestant church expected a more reserved mourning, and stoicism remained a moral ideal in the western tradition, Richard Strier (2004) argues that passion was not totally condemned in the Renaissance. Strier illustrates how emotion was valued by some prominent philosophers and poets in the Renaissance period such as Petrarch (1304-1374) who says "what is the use of knowing what virtue is if it is not loved when it is known?" (qtd. in Strier 24). Knowledge is not sufficient in cultivating affection, which Petrarch takes as an important quality of being human. Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406 and the chancellor of the Florentine republic from 1375-1406) also disagrees with the view regarding the control of emotion. He is skeptical about stoic *apathia* and criticizes people who would present an ideal stoic response to the death of their own children ("I was already aware that I had begotten a mortal" [qtd. in Strier 25])[5] as not human beings at all. Salutati comments that:

> If there were such a person, and he related to other people like this, he would show himself not a man but a tree trunk, a useless piece of wood, a hard rock and obdurate stone. (qtd. in Strier 25)

Salutati values affections as the core and basic quality of human beings.

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[5] This statement is originally from *Tusculan Disputations*, trans J.E. King, LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1945: III. XXIV.

As we see, passion and emotion were multi-faceted in the Renaissance. On one hand, they were desired to be fettered by stoics and perhaps by Protestants too. On the other hand, and contradictorily, emotion, and by extension, mourning, was praised by Renaissance scholars like Petrarch, Salutati and many others. We might say that, under the tension of these extremes, although grief, as one type of emotion, was valued in the Renaissance, it was also supposed to be moulded in an appropriate fashion.

Indeed, the concepts towards grief and mourning keep changing in the Renaissance. As Pigman (1985) writes, "attitudes to mourning begin to change towards the end of the sixteenth century. In the early part of the century [around 1550s] Englishmen are acutely anxious about the grief, which they regard as subversive of the rule of reason and domestic and social order... By the first decades of the seventeenth century total condemnation of mourning entirely disappears from the moral and theological tracts, while increasingly more tolerant conceptions of moderation take its place" (2). Although people seem to be more open to emotional expression, Pigman stresses that "the more sympathetic attitude does not replace the more severe one" (2). However, Pigman does not offer an explanation of this change; he says that "the reasons for the shift in attitude are obscure... not enough is known about the history of

the emotions and of the family"; what is needed is "not grand attempts at synthesis on the basis of inadequate information" (2).

However, perhaps drama can play a role. The improvement of the qualities of drama in the Renaissance undoubtedly highlights and brings readers and audience to a finer representation of humanity. People begin to have a higher degree of concern and thus a more accepting attitude to the emotional needs of human beings. Swiss and Kent (2002) write that "the rise of literacy and individualism encouraged self-expression, and the introspective inclinations of the Reformation and Counter- Reformation as well as the cult of melancholy heightened self-consciousness about personal experience" (8). As a result, the contradictory emphasis both on emotion and the suppression of it is not unexpected.

As we turn to Shakespeare, we can see that, like his culture generally, he is both very interested in the phenomenon of mourning and seems to have a variety of opinions about it. In Shakespeare, mourning and bereavement is everywhere. Mourning is not only found in tragedies, like Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, etc., but also in history plays, like King John, the Three Parts of Henry VI, Julius Caesar, etc., and even comedies, like Twelfth Night and Much Ado about Nothing. Shakespeare's plays demonstrate a glimpse of how

the new attitudes of grief and mourning affected traditional thinking. For example, there are many instances, on the part of Shakespeare's characters who are bereft, of asserting the appropriateness of the duration and intensity of grief. But at the same time, there are also many example of characters in bereavement breaking the 'social rules of mourning.' In addition to the terms of proper degree of mourning, Shakespeare also presents ideas of dealing with the emotional bonds with the dead which are different from the convention. Dubrow (1999) writes that "in fact, in Shakespeare's culture, as in ours, mourning often involves not cutting off relationships with the dead person but rather redefining those links in ways that render them different but no less potent" (158). She uses Pericles as the example showing that he overcomes grief and recovers his "peace and stability not by casting off his father's armour but by getting it back" (159). In my view, Shakespeare's presentation of the aspects of mourning and bereavement can be termed both concluding and forward-looking.

As we know, twentieth century grief theorists propose different theories explaining the work of mourning. Perhaps the most famous is Sigmund Freud's prominent and often quoted paper "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) which attempts to explain of the process of mourning and distinguish between normal

and pathological mourning. On the basis of Freud's theory, Hans W. Loewald (1962) elaborates mourning as an internalization process in which the mourners absorb the loss within their egos so as to untie the grief. There are other theories as well. John Bowlby (1964) proposes an attachment theory which he uses to explain people's reaction to loss[6]. Coming to the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, grief theories bring up yet a new understanding of grief, perhaps a continuation of Loewald's views on internalization. They do not take mourning as a process for relinquishing the emotional bond with the deceased person but instead transforming the mutual bonding and replacing it within the ego of the mourners. Other grief theorists see the work of mourning as a meaning reconstruction process (Neimeyer 2002, Klass, Silverman & Nickman 1996).

Attempting to integrate Renaissance approaches to mourning and the understanding of bereavement, grief and mourning in *modern* terms, this thesis explores the turmoil of Shakespearean characters' grieving hearts in three chapters. In chapter two, mourning is discussed primarily from a social perspective, one that examines the issue of the 'proper' degree of mourning as

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[6] He suggests in his three-volume works Attachment and Loss (1964) that attachment bonds are established between people, which are an extension of the bonding between mother and child. A deprivation or termination of the emotional bonds provokes anxiety and this initiates a pattern of behavioral reaction to loss.

explored by a range of Shakespearean characters. This chapter does not claim to offer a 'guideline' to proper Renaissance mourning; on the contrary, it exposes a doubt of any 'rules' to proper mourning. Chapter three focuses on the gender aspect of mourning and bereavement from the starting point that *bereavement is gendered*. While women are socially, politically and domestically weak, I argue that, in Shakespeare's world, they are emotionally empowered in bereavement owing to the parallelism of emotional expression and femininity. For men, while they are generally empowered in other aspects of society, they are 'required' to hold their grief and tears in bereavement in order to maintain their manhood; only when shedding tears for their country are men regarded as masculine and patriotic.

Chapters two and three suggest that it is not easy to define 'proper' mourning. For example, both extremely expressive and very restricted mourning can be seen as equally acceptable orientations for dealing with bereavement; as suggested by Stroebe and Schut (2000) the former is a loss orientation and the latter is a restoration orientation (a topic to be discussed further in chapter three), but both are valid models of mourning. Either approach should enable the psychological mechanism of overcoming grief and restoring life under a healthy condition. However, as chapter four illustrates,

failed mourning sometimes occurs. This chapter explores some possibilities of failed mourning in Shakespeare which serve as a counter example highlighting the basic 'function' of mourning: helping the bereaved to regain the power lost in facing the death of their beloveds. As highlighted by this chapter, mourning actually is an empowerment process. People may not gain additional power directly in mourning; but at least, a healthy mourning helps the bereaved re-gain the energy and strength that they lost in facing the death of their beloveds. Hamlet will be examined extensively in this chapter.

Mourning exists across cultures and religions. It is a natural expression of the grievous and sorrowful emotion towards the loss of the beloveds by death; yet the culture of emotional control or emotional liberation always directly affects the attitude of mourning. Although mourning may take different forms in different countries and times, it is not only a ritual showing outwardly the emotion of grief felt for the deceased beloved; more significantly, it is an internal psychological process which the mourner goes through to overcome his sorrowful emotion and readjust himself in terms of his beliefs and values in order to survive the death of the person he loves and is close to.

Chapter Two

Proper Degree of Mourning

"Thou know'st tis common—all that lives must die"

(Hamlet 1.2 72-3)

We live, we die. This natural life cycle is fixed and constant. Yet, no matter how common it is, death is still mysterious and horrible. Death occurs in accidents, in murders, in terrorist attacks, in diseases and sickness; all of these occasions remind people how close death is to us. However, experience is distinguished from knowledge. We cannot understand and realize death until we experience the death of someone close and beloved. When someone close to us dies, in contrast to a stranger, we do not merely feel pain, more specifically, we *mourn* over the dead person as a natural expression of the feeling of loss. Such mourning takes both physical and psychological form. Grief, as the major emotional component in mourning, can "take the form of crying, talking, time spent alone away from people, writing poetry even" (Watkin 2004). It just varies among individuals. Some can get over the feeling of loss with a self-arranged 'therapy,' but some may need more external aids to overcome their grief.

Although societies, both in Shakespeare's time and ours, try to establish a 'proper' mourning, this is not actually possible, as Shakespeare shows us. Rules exist perhaps because mourning is a behaviour that deviates from normal activities; and thus societies try to endow 'appropriateness' to the duration and intensity of mourning and proscribe 'improper' mourning. There may have been a religious reason for this in Renaissance England. The Protestant church regarded excessive mourning as a lack of faith to God (Pigman 1985: 30). Therefore, the bereaved should only pursue a moderate grief and be patient. Nevertheless, this chapter will show that the social or religious confinement is not really possible; there may not exist a scale for measuring an 'appropriate' mourning at all. Everyone must mourn in his or her own way and outsiders cannot really judge others in terms of mourning. Perhaps the only crucial factor regarding mourning is the sincerity and genuineness of the bereaved.

The Aftermath of Death

Death occurs very often in reality, and so in literature too; it is of course not unique to Shakespeare's plays. The world does not stop for the dead; yet the world changes in the eyes of those who must go on. There are, however, several subtly different responses to death on the part of those

affected by it. One of these is bereavement, which generally is defined as the state of being deprived of someone by death. Rees (1997) writes that "the origin of the word bereavement... is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *beriafien*, meaning to be robbed" (156). Bereavement produces emotions of loss; yet the intensity depends largely on the importance attached to the deceased. There is a stronger response to the death of a beloved person than bereavement—mourning. While bereavement refers to the condition of the deprivation and loss, mourning embeds a deeper emotion of pain and grief for the loss of someone beloved. And as we shall see in chapter four, there is also melancholy. It can be defined as deep sadness lasting for some time; it is also categorized by Freud as a pathological form of mourning. However, this is not to say that a more agitated emotional response proves the bereaved to have a better virtue. I hope to show that, for Shakespeare, all levels of emotional expression can denote the true emotion of the mourners.

Mark Antony's behaviours in Antony and Cleopatra (1606) illustrate nicely the distinction between bereavement and mourning. When Antony's wife, Fulvia, dies, he is very calm. Antony's heart certainly is stirred a little at Fulvia's death because of his responsibility for it: "his absence" during "the business she hath broached in the state" is the main cause of his wife's death.

His "present pleasure" (1.2 117) in Alexandria with his mistress Cleopatra, indeed, "by revolution low'ring, does become the opposite of itself" (1.2 118-119). However, although Antony is sad, he only shows slight regret and sorrow for Fulvia's death. For example, he recognizes that "ten thousand harms more than the ills I know/ My idleness doth hatch;" (1.2 122-123) his attention is not drawn directly to the death of Fulvia but to state affairs. As a close friend of Antony, Enobarbus' cynical response to Antony, that he should give "a thankful sacrifice" (1.3 153) for the death of Fulvia perhaps, to some degree, also reflects Antony's own view: the wish to 'eliminate Fulvia' without his direct involvement. Antony's decision to go home is "not alone the death of Fulvia," (1.2 172) but also results from the volatile political condition of the state and the letters of his friends in Rome that "petition (him) at home" (1.2 175). Antony is in bereavement because his wife has passed away, but he is not in mourning because he lacks deep love for Fulvia, his dead wife.

On the contrary, Antony mourns for Cleopatra bitterly. His love for Cleopatra even causes his suicide after hearing the false news of her death. Feeling remorseful for having accused Cleopatra as his betrayer to Caesar, Antony feels that he is responsible for her death. Antony not only is bereaved, but here, unlike his behaviour at the death of Fulvia, he shows signs of

sadness and sorrow. He realizes that his anger is purposeless in the absence of Cleopatra; his irritated emotion is replaced by grief. He mourns for Cleopatra. He declares to the *dead* Cleopatra that "I will o'take thee" (4.15 44). Without Cleopatra, everything is "torture" (4.15 46); any business is in vain. The death of Fulvia brings Antony back to state affairs; that of Cleopatra leads him to the dreadful thought of "th' inevitable prosecution of/ Disgrace and horror" (4.15 65-66). He wants to put an end to his life and join Cleopatra, "where souls do couch on flowers we'll hand in hand,/ And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze" (4.15 51-52). He wants to use death to redeem his fault. He imagines that his soul can join with Cleopatra's; they will be united again in the afterlife and even be admired by ghosts, such as those of the famous lovers Dido and Aeneas. Whether or not Antony is reacting properly, his different attitudes towards the deaths of Fulvia and Cleopatra, nonetheless reinforce the distinction between a more socially expected form of grief, bereavement, and the deep personal feeling of grief, mourning.

The Social Measurement of Mourning

Antony's widely differing reactions to the deaths of Fulvia and Cleopatra lead us into the focus of this chapter: the question of a proper degree of mourning. One might say that Antony's emotional response to

Fulvia is inadequate and that his response to Cleopatra is excessive; indeed, early Modern England might have put the matter in these terms. As Ralph Houlbrooke (1998) explains, society "demanded a degree of control on the part of the individual... excessive grief was normally deprecated... not to feel grief at all... was unnatural... [which] suggested that the individual was something less than a full human being. In between lay moderate grief" (221).

Shakespeare does seem to suggest that some mourning is misguided, and even excessive. Olivia, the countess in Twelfth Night (1601), takes mourning very seriously. Olivia has lost her father "some twelve month since" (1.2 33) and a brother "shortly" after (1.2 35), so she obstinately carries on the mourning ritual and intends it to last for "seven years" (1.1 25) as a "sad remembrance" (1.2 31) for them. Her love for her father and brother is unquestionable; yet, her mourning is excessive. As Houlbrooke writes, "sorrow itself was not condemned, but excessive grief was" (222); excessive grief is not respected by this society. Yet Olivia is determined to mourn for seven years in which "like a cloistress she will veiled walk" (1.1 27) and also she cries "once a day" that fills "her chamber round/ with eye-offending brine" (1.1 28-9). Thus Feste the clown ironically and mercilessly mocks Olivia's excessive mourning:

Feste: Good madonna, why mournest thou?

Olivia: Good fool, for my brother's death.

Feste: I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

Olivia: I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

Feste: The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul, being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen. (1.5 62-8)

Feste's wit hits the nucleus of Olivia's problem: her excessive and stubbornly persistent mourning is meaningless. Although his words seem to be a bit too unsympathetic and uncaring to one in bereavement, it could stimulate deep thought in Olivia and her people, and also in readers and spectators. Mourning was respectable; it could be conveyed by different forms of expression. Any spontaneous reaction to the death of someone close and beloved, either prolonged or short, could constitute mourning; yet Olivia mourns only because she should or has to, which is not quite meaningful and thus her excessive mourning leaves her a 'laughing-stock' for Feste to mock at.

Olivia's example shows that even mourners, deep in grief, can be self-conscious enough to pay attention to the social rules of mourning; clearly,

those around them, who are more distant from the sorrow, will certainly tend to speak more rationally about mourning. For example, in Much Ado about Nothing (1598-9), Antonio attempts to comfort his brother Leonato on the supposed death of his daughter, Hero. Antonio counsels Leonato not to "second[7] grief/ against yourself" (5.1 2-3). He is trying to be consoling but he is too rational. He does not understand Leonato's grief and thus inconsiderately comments that "men from children nothing differ" upon loss (5.1 33). Antonio's counsel is ineffective because he is not personally experiencing what he is talking about.

However, just as Olivia's excessive grief seems to be criticized by the wise Feste, so too does Leonato scorn his brother's advice, using wise and strong words which make a strong case against excessive rationalism in mourning. Antonio's rational counseling and consolation are too cold and numb to Leonato; they "fall into mine ears as profitless/ As water in a sieve" (5.1 4-5). Rational talk enters one of his ears and comes out of the other; it is not desired. Because of the close relationship between him and Hero, which no one else can fully understand, Leonato thinks that nobody can understand his heavy feeling of loss and his "load of sorrow" (5.1 28). One might say

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[7] **second** assist (Shakespeare, William. Much Do About Nothing. Ed. David L. Stevenson. U.S.A.: Signet. 1998:79)

Leonato is alienating himself from others; but one might also say that the deep sense of grief on the part of a mourner is not something that can be summarized in platitudes of consolation. Undeniably, consolation brings comfort to the bereaved, who probably is in need of it. However, sometimes people talk from knowledge rather than experience and this can sound inconsiderate and rude to the mourners.

In order to try to better ascertain a proper degree of mourning, we can look at some other Shakespeare plays. In Macbeth (1606), Prince Malcolm tries hard to settle the grief of Macduff upon the startling news of the murder of his wife and children. A nobleman of Scotland, Rosse, delivers to Macduff the news that his "castle is surpris'd; your [his] wife, and babes,/ savagely slaughter'd" (4.3 204-5). Like many people who hear the death of someone close and beloved, Macduff is stunned and takes some time to restore his mind. Prince Malcolm encourages him to face the reality and vent his grief. He asks Macduff "ne'er pull your hat upon your brows:/ Give sorrow words" (4.3 108-9). Malcolm worries that "grief, that does not speak,/ Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break" (4.3 209-210). Silence would only overwhelm Macduff's heart and worsen his sorrow. Therefore, Malcolm tries to shorten Macduff's mourning by encouraging "revenge, to

cure this deadly grief" (4.3 214-5) and even challenging his masculinity to "dispute it [the murder] like a man" (4.3 220). Despite the fact that Malcolm, like Antonio, talks to one in bereavement as an *outsider*, his consolation and suggestion are more effective than Antonio's. Perhaps this is because Malcolm, unlike Antonio, has personally experienced the loss of close friends, perhaps even family; perhaps it is because Malcolm offers more specific advice: that Macduff express his sorrow in words and especially in action. Since Macduff is a warrior, Malcolm's advice is sensible and constructive to him, and (as we shall see in chapter three) reminds him of the priority of nation over his personal matters.

To say that social rules regarding the proper degree of mourning can be superficial is not, however, to say they are not useful. For example, Hamlet's anger at Gertrude's insufficient mourning for Hamlet Senior is not only anger at the shallowness of her personal feelings but at the lack of respect she shows for the dead king and husband. Perhaps if Gertrude had followed the proper social rules, she would not have been so criticized by her son. Roland Frye (1984) explains the difference between Gertrude's insufficient mourning and general court practice. He writes that "death in the Renaissance was not quickly dismissed or easily forgotten, but involved

social as well as liturgical rituals devised over the centuries to dignify the ultimate *rite de passage*. These social rituals would be observed not just for a few hours or a few days but for weeks and even months." (83). Gertrude's mourning is too short; her remarriage even exposes her to a charge of infidelity. This accusation is not immoderate. Frye also writes that "when judged in sixteenth-century terms, Gertrude's behaviour is utterly scandalous… it was customary in England for widows to respect the so-called 'dolefull month' during which they remained in apartments entirely hung in black, and after that they continued wearing black clothes for three or four years or even longer and often retained their heavy black veils for the rest of their lives" (84-5). Since "within a month," (1.2 145) when Gertrude should be still wearing her mourning clothes, she has switched into a wedding gown and married her brother-in-law, Claudius, she can be criticized for mourning insufficiently. Hamlet is very annoyed with Gertrude's remarriage:

> … Within a month,
> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
> She married. O, most wicked speed, to post

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! (1.2 153-7)

He compares his mother's short mourning with "a beast" that lacks reasoning powers but "would have mourned longer" (1.2 151). Gertrude's short grief is indefensible and associated by Hamlet with her lust and desire. Even she herself admits that her re-marriage with Claudius is "o'erhasty" (2.2 57) and cites this as one of the reasons causing Hamlet's lunacy.

Clearly, given the wide range of possible approaches of mourning it is difficult to ascertain Shakespeare's own views. However, it seems to me that Shakespeare is critical of those who would impose their own sense of propriety upon the inner pain of others. To adopt a 'textbook' approach and demand a 'correct' attitude of mourning is, ultimately, far too unfeeling and unacceptable. Claudius, far worse than Antonio, talks about the rules of mourning not only superficially, but also hypocritically and without true emotion, when he lectures Hamlet on his 'excessive' mourning. Claudius seems to hold a very moral rationale in that he agrees that "the survivor [is] bound/ In filial obligation for some term/ To do obsequious sorrow" (1.2 90-2). He regards Hamlet's desire and tendency in these "mourning duties" (1.2 88) as "sweet and commendable" (1.2 87). However, Claudius claims that "obstinate condolement" (1.2 91) is "most incorrect to heaven" (1.2 95) and

therefore, Hamlet should "throw to earth this unprevailing woe" (1.2 106-107). He demonstrates a church view that persistent mourning is an act lacking patience and faith to God. Claudius chides Hamlet's behaviours as:

> … a fault to heaven,
>
> A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
>
> To reason most absurd, whose common theme
>
> Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried
>
> From the first corpse till he that died today,
>
> 'This must be so'… (1.2 101-6)

Claudius' dogma sounds very logical; however, an indifferent tone in his lecturing is not hard to detect. If Hamlet has lost a father, Claudius has also lost a brother, yet never shows any sense of grief. His rationality and calmness make people (at least Hamlet) suspicious of him in relation to the death of Hamlet senior, instead of convincing people of his religious and wise kingly image or giving Hamlet good advice. His biblical reference to Cain killing his brother Abel ("the first corpse" (1.2 105)) as the first murder case in human history ironically provides a suggestion of his relation with the death of Hamlet senior (indeed, it is Claudius who murders Hamlet senior). Claudius teaches us through his counter-example that death is not a mere natural life

cycle or something that must happen to the bereaved. It is always painful, unexpected and undesired. Therefore, Claudius' advice of the proper degree of mourning to Hamlet is so rational that it becomes indifferent, unacceptable and even hypocritical. Even worse, these words are spoken by the man who killed the one he should mourn for. Claudius is evil.

The Bandage of Mourning: Empathy

As the example of Claudius implies, mourners do not need clichés but empathy. Only an empathetic sharing or encouragement is sensible and helpful to the ears of the mourners. When we go back to the example of Leonato, we can see that although Leonato is not mourning hysterically (indeed, he knows his daughter is not even dead), he cannot escape the typical pessimistic psychology of a mourner who desires considerate comfort. He would accept counsel from "such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine" (5.1 7). He would like to listen to "a father that so loved his child,/ Whose joy of her is overwhelmed like mine… speak of patience" (5.1 8-10) because he thinks that if similar situations had happened to somebody else, they would have had the same response. He believes "there is no such man" (5.1 20) who could wave away sorrow when he "smile[s] and stroke[s] his beard;" (5.1 15) "cry 'hem' when he should groan;" (5.1 16) "patch grief" by using some

"proverbs" (5.1 17) and making "misfortune" disappear by drinking with "candle-wasters[8]" (5.1 18). Knowledge of mourning is different from and incomparable to the experience of mourning. Therefore Leonato thinks that people should not "counsel and speak comfort to that grief/ Which they themselves not feel" (5.1 21-2). Once they have tasted the same situation, they would no longer "give preceptial to rage,/ fetter strong madness in a silken thread" (5.1 24-5). Even the air they breathe is filled with "ache"; and every word they speak is "agony" (5.1 26). Leonato stresses that "no man's virtue nor sufficiency/ To be so moral when he shall endure/ The like himself" (5.1 29-31). He stresses that the shock that death brings is not imaginable to people who lack these experiences. He desires empathy for his bereaved heart.

A similar example demonstrating the necessity of empathy for any definition of proper mourning can be found in King John (1596). Constance mourns agitatedly for her captured and lost son, Arthur. The certainty of King John's determination to eliminate Arthur and the uncertainty of Arthur being able to escape this doom produces acute anxiety in Constance. Therefore she mourns as if Arthur is already dead. However, Cardinal Pandulph

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[8] **candle-wasters** revelers (Shakespeare, William. Much Do About Nothing. Ed. David L. Stevenson. U.S.A.: Signet. 1998:79)

rebukes her that "you hold too heinous a respect of grief" (3.4 90) and King Philip of France also criticizes her that "you are as fond of grief as of your child" (3.4 92). They do not appreciate and cannot bear Constance's excessive grief. They try to stop her from mourning and advise her to resume the normal life pattern. Yet, Constance is resentful towards their words, which only sound apathetic and unfeeling. She needs empathetic ears and lips that will listen to how grief overwhelms her and utter soft and affirmative words. She despises their companionship and bids them farewell saying that, "Had you such a loss as I,/ I could give better comfort than you do" (3.4 99-100). The unsuccessfully comforting words not only fail to assuage Constance's grief, but even push her to a more isolated position. So, although the existence of social customs of mourning may have positive value in Shakespeare's world, practically, perhaps, there are no rules of mourning at all.

The Lack of Rules

Bereavement is a personal and individual experience; people's mourning depends on many factors like the bereaved's personality, beliefs, religion, and even some external incidents that happen to him or her. Therefore, in early modern England, people and society may desire a

moderate grief and have a set of rather rigid rules of mourning in mind for social security and stability. Nonetheless, in terms of individuals, there can be no 'rules' for mourning, nor social regulations to govern it, nor predictive 'rules' about whether or not a person will mourn, nor for how long and to what intensity. Both a short and brief mourning, and a long and thorough mourning, can be equally fine and acceptable, as long as the mourning is sincere and genuine.

For example, Hamlet's mourning is criticized by Gertrude and Claudius as too long and excessive; however, his mourning can be seen as genuine and actually reasonable. The 'properness' should be evaluated in terms of Hamlet's mourning itself instead of other people's comments, as they may be biased, untrue or fail to reflect Hamlet's inner thinking. Hamlet obviously is in a complex emotional state. The tension between his emotion of bereavement and the state's joyful celebration of the new marriage of Claudius and Gertrude confuses and paralyzes Hamlet. He can neither escape nor face the reality, and thus remains depressive and even melancholic as the play develops and the ghost reveals the secret of the murder of King Hamlet by Claudius (melancholia and bereavement will be discussed in Chapter Four). Not two months after the death of King Hamlet,

Gertrude requests Hamlet to "cast thy knighted colour off,/ And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark./ Do not forever with thy vailed lids/ Seek for thy noble father in the dust./ Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,/ Passing through nature to eternity." (1.2 68-73). Yet, grief indeed overwhelms Hamlet and he is not pretending. So he denies his mother's accusation; he stresses that neither his "inky cloak... customary suits of solemn black... windy suspiration of forced breath...nor the fruitful river in the eye... can denote him truly" (1.2 77-83). The mere appearance and action of mourning can be imitated and played, yet his pain is from "within which passeth show... the trappings and the suits of woe" (1.2 85-86). In terms of the social level, Hamlet is indeed not cooperative with his nation; he is not celebrating with Gertrude and his new father, Claudius, but keeps on mourning for the dead king. So judging by social rules, his mourning is improper. However, the standard of this social measurement is problematic and even immoral, and thus Hamlet's mourning may not be improper. In terms of the individual level, since Hamlet is just carrying out his mourning duty as a son with genuine affection, his mourning is a proper one. Yet the melancholy of Hamlet is evidence of pathological mourning (Freud distinguishes melancholy from normal mourning) which once again reduces our positive evaluation of him.

Hamlet's example is so contradictory that one can almost feel the limitation of the rules of mourning.

Hamlet grieves because he loves his father; yet love and grief towards the deceased are not necessarily directly proportional; the sorrow can always be vented in another way. Macduff in Macbeth (1606) is a Scottish warrior. He is brave and righteous on the battlefield and loving to his family. On hearing the death of his beloved wife and children, Macduff is surely in deep sorrow. However, upon the request to "dispute it [his grief] like a man" (4.3 219) by Malcolm, Macduff tends to accept his advice but he also complicates that acceptance. He answers that :

> I shall do so;
>
> But I must also feel it as a man:
>
> I cannot but remember such things were,
>
> That were most precious to me. (4.3 220-3)

Macduff accepts Malcolm's suggestion of converting his grief into revenge but refuses the conventional rules of mourning to terminate his emotion. He agrees that men should be tough, but at the same time, men should also feel things. Macduff cannot help thinking about his family and he cannot stop his grief because of his love and bonding with his family. Yet, as a warrior, he

represses his personal sensibilities and prays to the "Heavens" (4.3 231) to empower him to fight against Macbeth, the "fiend of Scotland" (4.3 233). Macduff puts aside his mourning and overcomes his frail and sentimental emotions. Indeed, Macduff's mourning is short, but his grief is not.

Therefore, a short duration of mourning does not necessarily mean lack of respect. The time for recovering from grief varies among individuals. In Twelfth Night (1601), Viola and her brother encounter a shipwreck. Viola survives and arrives at Illyria; yet her twin brother, Sebastian, is missing. Viola at first pessimistically thinks her brother is in "Elysium[9]" (1.2 3) which means Sebastian may be dead already. However, her attitude becomes positive and she decides that she is going to do something constructive in the land of Illyria, which may be sustained by the glimpse of hope that "Perchance he [Sebastian] is not drowned" (1.2 4). Without seeing and discovering her brother's dead body, her fear is put aside and ignored temporarily. She can thus revive her mood and life very shortly after the shipwreck. Viola transcends her sorrows and worries into an optimistic perspective. Her short mourning does not prove her ungrateful, but only heightens her love for her brother and for life.

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[9] Elysium means "a home of the blessed after death" in Greek mythology (The Oxford English Dictionary)

Viola demonstrates the sorrow of a righteous person in bereavement; interestingly, Macbeth's reaction to his dead wife shows that evil and cruel people are also disturbed in bereavement. On the battlefield and in the court, if Macduff is courageous, loyal and honourable, then Macbeth is valiant, ambitious but unscrupulous. Macbeth is undeniably cruel to his enemies or anyone against him and he becomes more and more evil as the play continues. However, the battlefield temperament may only reflect a small degree of one's true humanity; grief is an equally revealing moment. Bereaved by the suicide of Lady Macbeth, Macbeth is more calm and indifferent than Macduff is towards the death of his family. However, no matter how little his mourning is, his grief is there; maybe 'disturbed' is a more appropriate word to describe Macbeth's emotion. He is not easily agitated because his humanity is exhausted and controlled by his own evil. When he hears "a cry of women," (5.5 8) he says he has "almost forgot the taste of fears" (5.5 9). He admits that he has "supp'd full with horrors:/ Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,/ Cannot once start me" (5.5 13-5). He loses the ability to be alert to what is happening and to the appearance of dismal matters. However, when he hears that "The Queen…is dead," (5.5 16) he is not totally unfeeling. When he utters that Lady Macbeth

"should have died hereafter," (5.5 17) he laments deeply for her in a very repressed way. The footnote of the Arden edition suggests that "this simple statement is ambiguous" (p.152). It could either mean "she would have died sometime" or "Her death should have been deferred to a more peaceful hour; had she lived longer there would have been a more convenient time for such a word". These two meanings are possible. Yet, in parallel with the hopeless speech following, this statement also carries a sense of the eternal damnation of Lady Macbeth. Because of the evil deeds of murdering King Duncan and Banquo, both Lady Macbeth's and Macbeth's hearts are hardened gradually. They seem to have "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow" (5.5 19) for repentance. However, they actually have less and less freedom to return; "all our yesterdays have lighted fools/ The way to dusty death" (5.5 22-3). Macbeth is in despair; he mourns not only for his dead wife, but also for his own dead soul. He analogizes life as a drama in which each human is "a poor player, /that struts and frets his hour upon the stage,/ And then is heard no more" (5.5 24-26). Life is "Signifying nothing" (5.5 28). His reaction to Lady Macbeth's death is more self-reflexive than mourning. If Macduff has to repress his grief by his effort and determination deliberately, then Macbeth represses his sorrow involuntarily; but it does not

mean his sorrow is shallow. His mind is too much occupied by the despair of his ruined life, which engulfs his sadness for his dead wife. Yet, his mourning, though brief and not completely separable from his evil nature, is at least genuine and sincere.

Conclusion

Grief, just like love, is an inborn emotion of human beings. When we watch the news of earthquakes in some remote parts of China or the tsunami in South Asia, we feel sorrowful and even feel pain for the victims and sufferers. John Donne writes that "No man is an island, entire of itself...Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind"[10]. His contemplation underlines the inter-connected relationship of human beings, as well as people's mortality. This connection endows people with empathy. Miranda in The Tempest (1611) demonstrates this human nature after witnessing a shipwreck. She tells his father that "I have suffered/ With those that I saw suffer!" (1.2 5-6) She regards each human life as that of a "noble creature" (1.2 7) but one who is "dashed... to pieces" (1.2 9) in the ship. She laments that "the cry did knock/ Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished" (1.2 8-9). Miranda shows the human quality of grieving, even for

[10] This is a famous passage from Meditation 17 of John Donne's *Devotion upon Emergent Occasions* (1624).

strangers. Needless to say, in bereavement, people losing their beloved is grevious, which is actually a reflexive emotional response. Therefore, we see that even Macbeth, a wicked character, mourns when his wife dies. Perhaps mourning is the person at their best.

Mourning has no script. It is not something taught or ruled or controllable. In human history, people may have rules, which may be created out of goodness, for governing others' mourning. Yet, when the rules become habits, the meaning of mourning is degraded and these rules become redundant, remaining on the simple level of fulfilling other people's, or social, requirements, without really expressing the mourners' true emotion. Of course, people asserting properness to the degree of mourning is a social phenomenon; they care because they respect death and treasure the attitude of mourning. However, unavoidably, people are influenced by the established culture and views. They relate death and bereavement, a very personal experience, to the confinement of society. Therefore, I have, and I think Shakespeare has, a skeptical view on the so-called 'proper degree of mourning.'

Chapter Three

Gender and Mourning

In the previous chapter, we saw how mourning is displayed differently by different people, and that it is never truly possible to judge the authenticity or validity of another's mourning. Nonetheless, as we have seen, there are certain social rules guiding the display of mourning in all societies, and one of the most important of these involves gender. In this chapter, we will examine some of the specific social expectations in relation to gender and mourning in Shakespeare's plays, as well as some ways in which gender roles are complicated by Shakespeare's characters.

Men and Women

In the patriarchal society of Shakespeare's time, males were the dominating figures in politics and economics and fathers the authority in the household. Under this social trend, power therefore was naturally allocated to men; women retained a more invisible status in terms of power distribution in this gender order. However, interestingly, early modern society was rather oppressive to both males and females. Each gender had his/ her own special burdens. It is easily observable that the females' burden was their

disempowerment in the public realm; and for males, theirs was the prohibition of showing emotion, even in bereavement. It is ironic that while the patriarchal power extends from the political sphere to the domestic sphere, it does not allow males to play a leading role in mourning and bereavement in Renaissance society. Emotion is instead categorized in a binary way: 'emotional control' is antithetical to 'sentiment' and the latter is for women, the former for men. Thus, although grief and mourning are a natural emotional expression in bereavement, a certain repression is desired for the male. We know that mankind is different from animals because we have the soul to love, to experience and to think. So undeniably, all human beings have emotions. We smile when we are happy; we cry when we are upset; we curse when we are angry; and we mourn when someone close and beloved passes away. These feelings exist in people's hearts no matter if one is a 'he' or 'she'. Yet, because the notion of masculinity does not allow males to express the distress and sadness of bereavement as freely as they may desire, they repress their emotion in most cases. On the contrary, women do not face this problem. The gendered bereavement gives women the privilege to grieve and express their emotion freely when their spouse, children or close relatives pass away; it is also females' roles to arrange the mourning as part

of their domestic sphere. Women are empowered emotionally and domestically in this way. Men, on the other hand, do also have some power when it comes to grief, but only exceptionally in 'national' affairs.

Bereaved women in grief

The social roles of women were confined to the domestic households of the Renaissance; they were mainly responsible for bearing and rearing children and handling the household economy. Women also lacked the chance of receiving education so "in early modern times, a work identity for a woman was comparatively rare" (Mendelson & Crawford 1998: 313). Even if they worked, they might have only engaged in some labouring work. However "the economic rewards of women's labour were usually smaller than those of men. Whatever work women performed was likely to be less highly valued" (301). The gender order of the Renaissance England was discriminative. Women did not enjoy many rights and were not treated fairly in either the economy or society.

In the Renaissance, women not only were socially inferior, they were also considered as emotionally inferior. Since the morality of early modern England required reason to dominate people and emotions to be controlled, women were 'categorised' and criticized as failing to fasten and fetter their

emotions. In bereavement, mourning was a natural expression of grief and loss; yet the expression of inner emotions was a symbol of weakness. Therefore, naturally, mourning and women were connected in parallel; mourning and bereavement were regarded as womanish or woman's business.

This correlation extends further back in time than Shakespeare's day. It is demonstrated and becomes one of the initial causes of the events in the tragedy *Antigone* by Sophocles. King Creon proclaims that brave Eteocles, the "city's champion," (ln 213) deserves to be "buried in his grave with every rite of sanctity given to heroes under earth" (ln 215-6) but treacherous Polyneices, "a returned exile," (ln 217) "shall no one honour with a grave and none shall mourn" (ln 223). He should be left "without burial" (ln 224) and "chewed up by birds and dogs and violated" (ln 225). Antigone cannot accept this edict since she is the sister of both Eteocles and Polyneices and she is being deprived of her divine rights of mourning. Though "death is prescribed" for whoever breaks the decree, without hesitation, she buries Polyneices' dead body with her own effort. This action enables Antigone to pay respect to her dead brother and to serve the gods by carrying out a mourning duty. She believes that to hold a funeral and mourn for the dead are the gods' will.

Moreover, she does not simply regard the burial as a duty; instead, she performs it with love and grief. Therefore, when Antigone discovers the exhumation of Polyneices' corpse despite her burial, she "burst[s] out in groans, calling terrible curses on those who had done the deed; and with her hands immediately brought thirsty dust to the body; from a shapely brazen urn, held high over it, [she] poured a tripled stream of funeral offerings; and crowned the corpse" (ln 470-5). Lack of burial is not only a humiliation to the dead Polyneices, but also a denial of Antigone's role as a mourner.

At the end of the play, King Creon is punished by the gods for what he has done which seems to affirm Antigone's heavenly responsibility in mourning for the dead brothers. Mourning as women's duty is not only confined to ancient Greece, but persists and extends into the Renaissance where mourning and bereavement remain gendered and are regarded as woman-related business.

When we turn to Shakespeare, we can still see that, as in Antigone, although women's voice and power are weak in the public realm, it is the female role to grieve and that this role can be empowering. In Renaissance England, it is still women's roles to arrange funerals and mourning. For example in The Winter's Tale (1609-10), the status of Paulina is many times

magnified on the matters of the Queen Hermione's death. Even though she is the wife of one of the lords in the court, Paulina is politically powerless. She is also supposed to speak politely and humbly in front of the king. However, upon the death of Hermione, Paulina accuses the King Leontes of his "tyranny" (3.2 178) and "jealousy" (3.2 179) and says these are the main causes of his wife's death. She is so angry that she commands the king "betake thee/ To nothing but despair" (3.2 208-9). She threatens, which even sounds like curses, that "A thousand knees,/ Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,/ Upon a barren mountain, and still winter/ In storming perpetual, could not move the gods/ To look that way thou wert" (3.2 209-13). She rebukes the king that for having killed the queen indirectly but cruelly; the wrong done to the queen cannot be compensated. She even demands the king not marry again without her approval and authorization. Because of the death of Hermione, Paulina's power is infinitely multiplied in terms of admonishing the king. Making good use of her role as taking care of the mourning issues, Paulina not only can accuse the wrongs of the king, but can even order the king with her commands; yet this empowerment is very exceptional. Paulina's role in dealing with death is shown at its peak when she brings Hermione back to life by magic (though it is also arguable that she

hides the Queen throughout the years). Not only is her supernatural power demonstrated, her preservation of righteousness (achieved by taking advantage of the female role in mourning) is also highlighted. Indeed, Paulina is extraordinarily outstanding in terms of her mourning role; undeniably, she utilizes it well.

While the power of mourning given to Paulina is exceptional, there are many other examples of how grief empowers women in Shakespeare. For example, In Henry VI Part II (1590-1), after Suffolk is executed and beheaded, Margaret holds her lover's head tightly against her breast and mourns sincerely:

> Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind
>
> And makes it fearful and degenerate;
>
> Think, therefore, on revenge, and cease to weep.
>
> But who can cease to weep and look on this?
>
> Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast;
>
> But where's the body that I should embrace? (4.4 1-6)

Although the king and other lords are in the scene as well, the focus of everyone is on Queen Margaret who is standing aside mourning for her lover. Margaret is aware that crying and mourning over pitiful scenes are the

privileges of women and she takes advantage of this fact to obtain sympathy from others. More subtly, Margaret cleverly uses the power that mourning gives a woman to conceal her secret of being Suffolk's lover. Actually King Henry VI does complain about the excess of Margaret's "lamenting and mourning /Suffolk's death" (4.4 20-1). He explicitly puts forth his fear, "if that I had been dead,/ Thou wouldst not have mourned so much for me" (4.4 22-3). Yet Margaret, in her powerful state, quickly dismisses his worry by claiming casually that "I should not mourn, but die for thee" (4.4 23). The genuineness of Margaret's promise is hard to judge, but she is clever in manipulating the privilege of mourning to assure the king of her loyalty. Yet, Suffolk is the one she loves and values. Therefore, although Margaret's temperament is tough and independent, distress still overwhelms her. On an even deeper level, Margaret is empowered through mourning by having this experience (as we have seen with Macbeth) bring out the best in her. Although she is overall a trouble-making character, her display of honest distress in mourning creates sympathy for her as does the power of her grief to overwhelm her usually tough and independent nature. Her strong desire to embrace Suffolk's absent body while carrying his head in her hands is a scary image for the readers, but it also effectively arouses commiseration.

The Duchess of Gloucester, in Richard II (1595) is another woman who knows how to become empowered through mourning. She is a widow whose husband, the Duke of Gloucester, is murdered. Despite the fact that the Duke of Gloucester has been dead for some time, the Duchess is still very much in grief. She painfully tells John of Gaunt that "grief boundeth where it falls/ Not with the empty hollowness, but weight" (1.2 58-9). The ritual of mourning may only last for a certain period, however, the Duchess's "sorrow ends not when it seemeth done" (1.2 61). As with Margaret, an audience might admire the Duchess' intensity of grief. But this grief is also strategic. The Duchess knows that, as a politically and physically powerless woman, she cannot have any practical plans or plots to "venge my Gloucester's death" (1.2 36). However, she knows that, as a mourner, she has the freedom to complain of her sadness and her husband's death, even long after the event. She even has the right to complain to God, as God is "the widow's champion and defence" (1.2 43). More importantly, the Duchess recognizes the thin line between mourning and revenge. It is true that in Renaissance England, women do not have the opportunity to do such things as revenge the deaths of their relatives; only men can do that and are often expected to do it. Women can grieve but, in bereavement, the bands of grief

are clearly and socially set: women are perfectly justified to grieve and mourn, but no further action should be taken, for example, taking revenge. But the Duchess uses the emotional power granted to her as a mourner to go further than mourning allows and to urge John of Gaunt to gain revenge for her. Yet, women's emotional power is not invincible. This power is not strong enough to intervene with men's decision and behaviours. John of Gaunt rejects her request.

A Conditional Empowerment

Although women are empowered in mourning, it is also possible to see this power as a restriction; for example, when women fail to mourn in bereavement, mourning no longer is their 'privilege' but becomes their 'duty'. Probably, one of the reasons that Olivia in Twelfth Night is regarded as mourning more than she 'needs' to is accounted for by this social rule: women who fail to mourn appropriately will receive blame. They may be regarded as unfaithful, cold-blooded and immoral. Gertrude in Hamlet loses her privilege in bereavement because she does not utilize it in mourning but only squanders and consumes it for a remarriage. Her failure to demonstrate a proper degree of mourning (discussed in chapter two) only leads to a limited extent of criticism; but her quick shift from the mourning gown to

wedding dress deprives Gertrude of the advantage as mourner and charges her instead with being lustful.

The ways in which displays of mourning can restrict as well as empower a woman are especially visible in the case of Queen Margaret's relationship with Gloucester in Henry VI Part Two. In this play, Queen Margaret hates the Duke of Gloucester, who is the protector of King Henry, so much that she conspires to murder him. But, in order to avoid suspicion, Queen Margaret tries to convince Henry VI of her innocence with her tears before the king accuses her of anything. She uses her power of grief 'affectionately' to defend herself:

> And for myself, foe as he was to me,
> Might liquid tears, or heart-offending groans,
> Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,
> I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,
> Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs,
> And all to have the noble Duke alive. (Part II 3.2 59-64)

She gives a beautiful and detailed speech of her grief and sympathy. However, Margaret's hatred for the Duke of Gloucester is so well-known and obvious that this speech of mourning is fake; so are her tears. Margaret's

grieving heart and tears are genuine when expressed for Suffolk, but not for Gloucester. As M. Kurtz argues, her tears are "'feminine' in the worst sense that Elizabethans could construe that word: not merely weak or helpless, but devious, manipulative, and... deeply dangerous." (169) Margaret abuses her power in bereavement by using her deceitful tears.

An example that well shows the frustration of women when faced with the situation of being empowered through mourning, but not sufficiently empowered, is that of Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing (1598-9). Like the Duchess of Gloucester, Beatrice mourns for her beloved. The Duchess of Gloucester mourns for her dead husband, while Beatrice mourns for her wronged and slandered good friend, Hero. Although Hero is only pretending to be dead, her loss of honour of chastity is almost the same as death. Women's social bonding is strong; their inferior social status makes them stick together even closer and stronger. So Beatrice mourns intensely for the misfortune of Hero and mourns angrily for Hero being unfairly treated. However, Benedick seems not to appreciate Beatrice's manner of mourning. Facing his accusation of excessive mourning, Beatrice argues confidently that mourning is her property:

Benedick: Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beatrice: Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Benedick: I will not desire that.

Beatrice: You have no reason. I do it freely. (4.1 254-7)

Unlike men, Beatrice does not take her weeping and grief as a shame. Instead, she thinks she is well justified to mourn "longer" (4.1 255) than the *defined* and *desired* duration of male mourning. Benedick's opposition to her mourning is ignored because Beatrice thinks he does not understand her love for Hero and thus her feeling of sorrow and injustice. Therefore, she believes she is entitled to mourn "freely" (4.1 257). Like the Duchess of Gloucester, Beatrice is powerless to avenge Hero's dishonour; and, like the duchess, she is frustrated by this lack of power. Unlike the Duchess, however, Beatrice is less passive and less cunning in venting her grief. When Benedick tells Beatrice to "bid me do anything for thee," (4.1 286) she takes the opportunity to ask for an act of revenge: "Kill Claudio" (4.1 287). Yet Benedick absolutely rejects this request, he dismissively says "Ha! Not for the wide world!" (4.1 288) Both the Duchess and Beatrice receive a refusal from the men they seek help from: neither John of Gaunt nor Benedick promises to take revenge for them.

Beatrice's distress at her helpless situation reminds us that having the rights of mourning may be as frustrating for women as it is empowering; a slight taste of power is more upsetting than having no power at all. Women are dissatisfied with the restrictions of grief; sometimes they want to surpass the confinement. However, their inferior social and public status fails to help them resist. Futile struggle can bring forth anger. Thus after failing to ask Benedick to take revenge for her, Beatrice is very agitated. She vows "that I were a man! I would eat his [Claudio's] heart in/ The market place!" (4.1 304-5) This angry expression shows Beatrice's frustration of being unable to do something for Hero, simply because she is a woman. Beatrice also sees Benedick as weak and foolish; she despises inactive and unfeeling men: "Manhood is melted into courtesies, valor into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too…I cannot be a man with wishing; therefore I will die a woman with grieving" (4.1 317-21). Beatrice treats manhood as ritualistic and hypocritical. She thinks her passion is even stronger than men's, yet her empowerment is confined to the emotional aspect only, and she realizes that in reality, she can only mourn like a woman.

To conclude, it seems that to retain the advantages that a bereaved woman can *enjoy*, observing the social proprieties of bereavement and mourning is the prerequisite. The emotional empowerment brings women increased subjectivity, in the sense of awareness of self and awareness of the bonds between women that are created through mourning, but at the same time, a greater social confinement results. In other words, through their privileges in bereavement, women seem to have more rights and freedom than they normally would enjoy in society. However, they are also restricted; they must demonstrate a 'genuine' grief in bereavement and their power in mourning is explicitly, as Beatrice makes clear, limited to sorrow and not to action such as revenge. In order to see the relationship between mourning and action, it is to men that we must turn.

Bereaved men in grief

Boys Don't Cry (1999) is a sad movie based on a true story which involves murder, violence and morality issues. The subject is grief over identities and life. The protagonist, Teena Brandon, is a girl who dresses and behaves like a boy in order to attain what she sees as a greater degree of 'freedom'. As one could predict, however, she causes more problems than she resolves. The climax of the story occurs in such scenes as her male

friends John and Tom checking Brandon's sex in the toilet and a conversation with a police officer where she recalls the painful experience of being raped.

Tears carry a symbolic meaning in the film, especially in these scenes. For example, when Brandon recalls the course of being raped and admits to the police officers she has a vagina, she cries. She is hurt and frustrated. In fact, her horrible experience only reinforces, and does not change, her previous beliefs about identity. The sex she hates does not bring her any luck or benefit but only makes her a victim. The tears act as a symbol of gender, and 'Boys don't cry' is a belief of Brandon. So while in the first part of the film, Brandon is tough enough to protect her female friend and brave enough for the dangerous game, bumper surfing; these qualities are not enough for her to be a boy. The tears rolling down her cheeks in the film's climatic scenes remind the audience as well as Brandon herself that she is a girl; and in the end she loses this gender game. As Boys Don't Cry makes clear, in general belief, grief on the part of men can be unacceptable and 'tears' as the sign of such grief are almost always forbidden. However, as this section of my thesis will demonstrate, there is at least one occasion when male grief and even male tears are acceptable, and that is in the case of nationalism.

The concept of tears being interpreted as feminine has remained relatively unchanged from the Renaissance until now. Indeed, repressing tears seems to be one of the most effective strategies to retain a masculine identity. For example, in Romeo and Juliet (1595), Romeo cries and behaves immaturely like a child when he is banished and cannot see Juliet again. He is greatly distressed and almost collapses; he even threatens to stab himself. However, the Friar chides Romeo:

> Are thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art.
>
> Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
>
> The unreasonable fury of a beast.
>
> Unseemly woman in a seeming man,
>
> And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both! (3.3 108-112)

The friar thoroughly criticizes Romeo's unmanly behaviour and response. As we have seen, in the Renaissance, men's high social status is 'justified' by their supposed rational reasoning and control over emotion; women, the next level below men in the hierarchy, are thought to have less emotional control; beasts are the basest group showing no emotional control at all. The Friar's comment is a humiliation to Romeo, but it truly reflects the Renaissance notion of tears and unrestrained manners. Tears are feminine. Crying upon

loss only shows cowardice. Behaving in a woman-like way is unacceptable in a man. Even worse, Romeo's vigorous response and behaviours are seen as beast-like. The friar thinks it is despicable to embody inappropriate femininity in apparent masculinity. This combination only degrades Romeo to a beast.

Similarly the Bishop of Carlisle criticizes Richard II for his response towards the news that Bolingbroke "grows strong and great in substance and in friends" (3.2 31) and even worse, "twelve thousand fighting men... are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled" (3.2 66-70):

> My lord, wise men ne'er wail their present woes,
>
> But presently prevent the ways to wail. (3.2 174-5)

When disappointment, anger and fear overwhelm 'womanly' figures like Richard and Romeo, they can only sit on the ground and lament about their desperate situations. Richard loses the military power that Bolingbroke gains. The power, together with honour, is part of the components of manhood. As Beatrice recognizes, tears do not help recover the hope of a favourable turn. Wailing over the wrongs and loss without acting oneself is useless and pointless. Regrettably, Richard gives a feminine response that only heightens his foolishness and weakness, which should not be the qualities of men.

Of course, examples of men mourning with tears and great sorrow can be found in Shakespeare; yet, like Romeo and Richard II, they are not very much appreciated. King Leontes in The Winter's Tale extensively and persistently mourns for his dead wife, Hermione. He proclaims that "once a day I'll visit/ The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there/ Shall be my recreation" (3.2 237-9). Leontes take these rituals as a repentance of his wrong accusation of his wife as adulterous. Over the years, Leontes keeps mourning for his dead wife. One of the lords advises him politely to cease mourning. He comments that "Sir, you have done enough, and have performed/ A saint-like sorrow. No fault could you make/ Which you have not redeemed" (5.1 1-3). He assures Leontes that the heavens have forgiven him, so he should also "forget your evil... forgive yourself" (5.1 5-6). Leontes' sincere mourning should not be regarded as improper; however, in the eyes of a Renaissance audience, his prolonged mourning may be a bit woman-like. In early modern England, holding back tears and controlling emotion are sensible and achievable for men in most situations. Yet, we must admit that, facing death, especially the death of those we love, this requirement is a challenge to them. Both Laertes in Hamlet and Macduff in Macbeth demonstrate to us this struggle.

To retain their masculinity, men do not mourn as explicitly as women. Shortly after Polonious' murder, Ophelia dies because she drowns herself in a brook. Laetres is doubly bereaved, yet he constrains himself to "forbid my tears" (4.7 159). Although he realizes that holding back tears is a justly masculine trait and "nature," (4.7 160) he is in such grief that he would rather be "shame[d]" (4.7 161). Yet he is certain that "when these [the tears he is shedding] are gone,/ The woman will be out" (4.7 162-3). His womanish behaviours are temporary. He dismisses his grief quickly into "rage" (4.7 165). Laertes is a strong masculine character who does not allow himself to dwell in the abyss of grief without an end. He is able to restore his masculinity in bereavement.

However, bereaved men pay a heavy price by repressing their grief and tears. They usually turn their emotion and feeling inwards or convert grief into strength or anger. For example, when Macduff hears the shocking news of the death of his whole family, he is stricken in grief. Yet, he is able to compromise his grief with manhood. He exclaims that "O! I could play the woman with mine eyes,/ And braggart with my tongue.—But, gentle Heavens,/ Cut short all intermission" (4.3 230-2). The bereaved Macduff could choose to let his eyes overflow with tears, as a woman does, and talk

over and over again about his grief of his dead family. However, he *chooses* to repress this emotion, showing the power of his manly reason and will, and prays God to grant him strength and terminate all the interruption, like his grief and sadness in bereavement, for him. He *chooses* to fight for his country and against Macbeth as the best resolution of his grief and the best revenge of his family's death.

As we see from the case of Macduff, masculinity not only requires emotional control, but also putting the nation prior to the family and other personal feelings. In Henry VI Part I (1592), at the funeral of Henry V, dukes and earls mourn for the good dead king. Their black clothes are an appropriate reflection of their emotion. The Duke of Exeter urges his fellows, "we mourn in black; why mourn we not in blood?" (1.1 17) He affirms his emotion. Naturally and normally, they mourn for the dead king and cry for the nation losing a good king. Yet their tears are short-lived. The Duke of Exeter is glad that they cry a little at the funeral, so that the bad news they soon receive, of losing the battle against France, should not induce a larger amount of their tears. He says "Were our tears wanting to this funeral,/ These tidings would call forth her flowing tides" (1.1 82-3). If Exeter were to free his tears into "flowing tides", they would be so abundant that they may not be

controllable. He considers the wars between England and France as more important than their grief for the dead king. Therefore, he desires a conversion of their appearance of grief and helplessness to an action of passion and patriotism. The Duke of Bedford is so responsive to the call that he declares "Give me my steeled coat. I'll fight for France./ Away with these disgraceful wailing robes!" (1.1 85-6) Tears are violently rejected by these noblemen. Mourning without tears is not a cold-hearted or an unfeeling behaviour. Instead, this involves a repression of personal grief. The dukes take the fall and rise of their nation as their responsibility, disregarding their personal feelings, even in bereavement.

Thus, while tears generally symbolize weakness, the tears of men for their nation are evidence of patriotism and are generally more accepted. In Julius Caesar (1599), Antony weeps after giving the famous "Friends, Romans, countrymen" (3.2 74) speech on Caesar's funeral. He may be weeping for the death of his friend, but, he also weeps for the country for losing a rightful, empathetic and humble king. Antony not only weeps for Caesar, but he reminds his Roman audience that Caesar has wept for them. He provides examples showing that Caesar is not ambitious as Brutus has accused him of being. Caesar "brought the captives home," (3.2 90) "wept"

(3.2 93) with the poor and "thrice refused... the kingly crown" (3.2 97-8) that Antony offered him. These are all masculine and admirable behaviours, including weeping with people in need. Caesar's tears are not effeminate as they symbolize his nationalism: his tears come out of his love for the nation and the people. Antony cannot reconcile such tenderness to Brutus' accusation of Caesar being ambitious. Wisely and strategically, Antony repeatedly and ironically 'confirms' with himself and the public that "Brutus is an honourable man" (3.2 88) every time after he praises Caesar's merit. So, the overtones of distrust and blame are delivered wholly to the public. Antony's weeping after giving the speech pushes the public's emotion to the peak. It also melts their doubt towards him to sympathy. Though Antony's speech and his tears carry a flavour of propaganda, his emotion is accepted by the public. People do not regard his tears as womanish. On the contrary, one plebeian says "Poor soul, his eyes are as red as fire with weeping;" (3.2 116) the other plebeian comments that "There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony" (3.2 117). People sympathize with him and admire this idiosyncrasy, because the tears he sheds are not only for a person, but for the fate of a nation.

As we examine the tears and grief of other Shakespearean males, we see other evidence that tears are acceptable in a nationalistic cause. For example, most of King Henry VI's tears are not admirable since they are for selfish and immature purposes; yet, his tears and mourning at the sight of the soldiers involved in civil war is an exception. Henry VI is a weak king who fails to assert his power and is taken advantage of by the queen and the nobles. In Henry VI Part III (1591), his side loses to Richard. Many soldiers are wounded and fall in battle. Seeing the soldiers carrying the dead bodies in front of his eyes, Henry is shocked and anguished:

> Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;
>
> And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
>
> Be blind with tears, and break, o'ercharged with grief
>
> (Part III 2.5 75-7)

Feeling powerless in improving the misfortune of the country and feeling sorry for failing to protect his people and soldiers, Henry is very much in "Woe above woe! Grief more than common grief!" (2.5 94-5) He mourns not only for the dead soldiers, but also for his country and for his identity as an impotent king. Henry's weeping is neither a manipulation of his nobles to gain for support, nor a show to his enemies to arouse sympathy. His tears are

genuinely nationalistic. Though Henry is late in acquiring the quality of a good king, his tears for his people and his nation are impressive. These tears are not a sign of weakness but humanity and empathy.

As Henry VI's example demonstrates, it can be difficult to distinguish the tears an at-times admirable king nobly sheds for his nation from those a weak and selfish king sheds for himself. Yet Shakespeare does provide guidance here. Richard II is less devoted to his country and seeking the benefits of the people than concerned about the security, extension and especially the display of his power. Thus when he loses his power and even his kingship, his focus, unlike Henry VI, remains on himself. He pities himself and laments over what has happened on him, as if he had suffered the poorest fate in the world:

> Let's talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs,
> Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
> Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth (3.2 140-3)

His words of grief and tears are so exaggerated and over-abundant that his images as a weak king image is highlighted, instead of allowing his tears to empower him to retain a kingly image. His language remains so poetic and

rhetorical that his tears act like an additional dramatic element instead of genuine emotion:

> Now is this golden crown like a deep well
>
> That owes two buckets filling one another,
>
> The emptier ever dancing in the air,
>
> The other down and full of tears am I,
>
> Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high. (4.1 174-9)

The dethroning of Richard is like a show in which he indulges in his misery. Unlike Henry VI, he is full of tears not because he regrets his bad-doing and impotence in ruling the country, but because he has lost his kingly status. Later, in declaring his deposition, Richard announces "With mine own tears I wash away my balm" (4.1 197). These are potent lines but his tears do not deliver a sense of dignity or shamefulness. He cries like a child losing his favourite toy. These tears are feminine, unaccepted and self-directed.

The dual process model

We have seen many examples of bereaved males and females and it seems that males and females are shown to have a large difference in coping with bereavement and grief. The dual process model suggested by Stroebe and Schut (2000) may help explain these different behaviours. They suggest

that there are two main strategies for coping with the experience of death and bereavement: loss orientation and restoration orientation. As we have discussed, females allow themselves or are expected by the society to express sadness for the death of the beloved, so they tend to adopt a loss orientation. But males tend to have a restoration orientation in bereavement. They prefer being more active and focus on activities in the hope of restoring the disrupted life pattern by their efforts. Therefore, this pattern explains why in bereavement, men tend to control their emotion and, in facing the decline of the nation, they are determined to save the country and fight bravely against the enemies. Both require the endeavour of facing and dealing with the loss instead of escaping it. Males are not stones; they also have emotions because they are also feeling human beings. So, though restoration orientation does not show the sadness towards the loss outwardly, it is still an approach of coping with emotion indirectly, rather than a way of avoiding the grief and loss.

Conclusion

Gender and bereavement are closely related in Shakespeare's England, or more explicitly, *bereavement is gendered*. Many Shakespearean characters demonstrate this social convention. Generally, women are

empowered in bereavement while men suppress their emotion. However, no matter whether a woman or a man grieves or does not grieve in bereavement, equilibrium is desired, lest women will abuse their subjectivity and men will become inhumane. Even the dual process model can only explain the usual behavioural phenomena of the two genders in facing death and bereavement, but is not an absolute guideline showing the difference of males and females in coping with loss. As we saw in Chapter two, Shakespeare does not provide any such absolute guidelines and may think none are possible. The dual process model only shows the trend of gender and bereavement. As Doka and Martin (a professor of Gerontology and a psychologist respectively) write, the grief "patterns are *influenced* by gender but not *determined* by it" (2000:2). Despite the *gendering* of grief and bereavement in societies, we should be well aware that a *gendered bereavement* is a cultural construction but not an eternal theory. Grief is not an emotion that can be or should be categorised as feminine or masculine; it is a *genderless* feeling, although Shakespeare's or even our society loves to divide everything into binary oppositions.

As we have moved from chapter two to this one, we have come closer from the general social 'standard' on mourning to a more specific aspect—gender—in relation to bereavement and grief. In the next chapter,

we will move even closer to investigate grief in the psychological aspect of an individual. Rather than focusing, as in chapters two and three, on examples of relatively successful and empowering mourning, chapter four will provide counter examples of characters who do not mourn effectively. These counter examples can also emphasize how an effective work of grief and mourning empowers the bereaved individuals in terms of a healthy mentality and psychology.

Chapter Four

Failed Mourning

"Who can be patient in such extremes?"

(Henry VI Part III 1.1 216)

Mourning is a matter of more than social and cultural needs; it is almost a basic instinct of human beings. Funerals and the rituals of black clothing can be regarded as mourning; yet it should not be forgotten that behind the scenes, the feeling of loss, pain, grief and sorrow are the impetus and the cause. People mourn over the dead because there is love and emotional bonds between the mourners and the deceased. In chapter two, we have seen that a sincere mourning is not decided by its duration or intensity. Though moderation of emotion is desired in early modern England, this is not a principle which can be universally applied. Both a short or long mourning can be effective and should be acceptable. Short mourning, like that of Viola for her brother, is not automatically equal to insufficient mourning. Viola 'digests' the grief effectively but not hastily and recollects herself in life. Viola transforms her respect and love for her brother into her positive attitudes towards life and the world, instead of consuming herself in grief and pain. Similarly, long mourning is not necessarily excessive. In The Winter's

Tale, Leontes mourns for his dead wife over many years. His mourning is long because he takes this ritual as a compensation for the "wrong" (5.1 9) he has done to the Queen. Yet, grief and sorrow cannot be measured in terms of appropriateness but genuineness. In chapter three, we have also looked at the gender aspects in bereavement. Although females and males may adopt different approaches in expressing their grief in bereavement, either way can be effective and successful. The grief of healthy mourning can be vented through expressing the painful and sorrowful emotion, like Margaret crying and lamenting for her lover Suffolk, or doing something to restore the normalcy, like Macduff persuading himself to divert his grief into the anger of revenge. There is not a frame for confining mourning.

Yet, some mourning is indeed unsuccessful. A popular Chinese folktale, The Butterfly Lover (The Chinese pinyin title is Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai), embeds a sad and tragic love story in which Zhu Yingtai cannot bear the death of her lover, Liang Shanbo, and chooses to end her mourning by falling into his grave and being buried with him. Some people like to compare this love tragedy with Romeo and Juliet as both of them are about tragic love. The story begins with Zhu Yingtai disguising herself as a boy in order to study at school where she later meets Liang Shanbo. The male

identity of Yingtai enables her to become a sworn brother of Shanbo; and more dramatically, they fall in love with each other. Shanbo refuses to acknowledge his love and desire because of his resistance to be involved in a same sex love relationship. Yet, it is too late when Shanbo realizes Yingtai's female identity; Yingtai has already been summoned home for an arranged marriage. Their love is also forbidden by Yingtai's parents as Shanbo is not wealthy enough. Finally, Shanbo dies of illness or perhaps love-sickness. Yingtai, failing to control her fate and overcome with grief, ends her life in Shanbo's grave. Mourning is supposed to be a self-defense mechanism which helps the mourners to get over their grief and pain of loss over a period of time. Yet, Yingtai's mourning only has one direction and choice: reuniting with her lover in death. Her love for Shanbo is so great that she cannot survive his death. Sadly, Yingtai mourns for Shanbo, but futilely. Failed mourning, occurring almost as frequently as normal mourning in literature, can be found in eastern as well as western literature, in both ancient and modern times.

Some theorists have tried to explain why mourning sometimes fails. There is a large variety of theories on mourning. Basically, most of them share the same view that mourning is not regarded as pathological because it

will cease over a period of time. Yet, since different theorists start their discussions using different perspectives, e.g. social, cultural, psychological, etc., their understandings of the cause of failed mourning sometimes vary.

Sigmund Freud, for example, claims the unresolved conflicts between the mourner and the dead person are the main cause of failed mourning. In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud attempts to distinguish healthy mourning from its pathological counterpart, melancholia. Freud suggests that when mourning proceeds successfully, the mourners' emotion is released from the lost object and is available to be redirected elsewhere. The completion of this process implies the end of mourning and thus a return to normalcy of the mourner. Yet in mourning's pathological counterpart, melancholia, Freud stresses that the process of the work of mourning cannot proceed effectively and completely, which results in a depressive emotion and self-reproaches. To Freud, such failed mourning occurs because the mourner is unconsciously disappointed with the loved person; when the person dies, the conflict remains unresolved. Therefore, those in bereavement are unable to decathect[11], and thus fail to free their emotion from the lost object; mourning continues. Freud uses Hamlet to represent

[11] Decathect is the opposite of cathect, meaning to discharge the mental energy. "Cathect" first appears in *Freud's Inhibitions* tr. A. Strachey 1936 xi. 145: A repressed instinctual impulse can be activated (newly cathected) from two directions.

what occurs when mourning is too extreme and becomes melancholy, as we will see in the last section of this chapter.

Some Possibilities of Failed Mourning

In bereavement, mourners have to deal with the memory of the beloved who passes away and adjust their values and mental states in order to survive the current mourning. Sometimes, however, this surviving experience is not so successful and effective. When we turn to the mourners in Shakespeare, it can be seen that not all mourners can overcome their grief and complete their work of mourning. Failed mourning sometimes occurs; mourners are unable to mourn because they suffer from the guilt of causing the death of the beloved, or simply their inability to survive the death of their beloved in bereavement.

Straightforwardly, guilt stops people from mourning. In most cases, when people mourn another's death, they remember the relationship with the deceased and even think of the faults they have committed against them. However, if those faults are so great, for example if a person directly or indirectly causes the death of the other person, mourning becomes difficult since it requires an acknowledgement of one's own sins, an admission that one is to blame. Therefore, these people often choose to repress such

grievous and guilty emotions and not to mourn. Brutus in Julius Caesar demonstrates this internal struggle. Brutus kills Caesar under the instigation of other conspirators who manipulate Brutus's inflexible love for his country. Other conspirators murder Caesar out of jealousy and ambition, but Brutus out of his love for Rome. Brutus tells the crowd that he has killed Caesar "not that I loved/ Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more" (3.2 273-4). He emphasizes that his love for his country outweighs his love of a single man; and "as he was/ ambitious, I slew him" (3.2 287-8). As a friend of Caesar, Brutus should want to mourn for his death; yet being the cause of Caesar's death, he fails to mourn. Mourning means admitting he is the one to be blamed. However, one cannot escape the rebuke of the conscience. Brutus actually feels guilty about the death of Caesar; however, he chooses to uphold the righteousness of preserving the republic of Rome and represses his grief for Caesar's death and his murderous deed. Brutus uses the honour of the principle of the republic and freedom to cover his grief at the death of Caesar. Nonetheless, his endeavour to repress his guilt and grief is futile; twice he sees the ghost of Caesar, which can be seen as a symbol of the "return of the repressed"[12]. Brutus also relates the loss of their battle to the

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[12] Freud introduces this psychological behaviour in his essay "Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence" (1896). It is a process whereby the repressed reappears

revenge of Caesar. He murmurs that "O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet./ Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords/ In our own proper entrails" (5.3 93-5). Brutus' guilt hinders his mourning which in turn leaves his grief unresolved.

Similarly, guilt stops Macbeth from mourning for the king he has killed and his murderous deed. After Macbeth kills King Duncan, he is able to pretend to be very sad and "furious" (2.3 106). He even kills the servants and charges them against the murder of the king in order to keep the servants' *silence* and remain himself innocent. However, although Macbeth's disguise can cheat other noblemen, he cannot cheat himself. He has never mourned for the death of Duncan and his murdering deed; and his guilt actually limits his will to repent. Therefore Macbeth cannot "pronounce 'amen'" (2.3 30) in his prayer because praying to God directs him to face his sins. But the guilty feeling does not go away itself but lingers in his mind. As a result, Macbeth suffers from hallucinations like hearing "a voice cry[s]" (2.2 34) that commands him "sleep[s] no more" (2.2 34). The repressed guilt returns. Even his evil wife also suffers from the haunting of guilt. Lady Macbeth writes and "rubs her hands" (5.1 25-6) in her sleepwalk, which are a reflection of her

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again, and in a distorted form, in the compromise between conscious and unconscious mind.

ineffective repression of guilt. Without dealing with the guilty emotion of plotting the murder of the king, Lady Macbeth goes mad eventually.

Guilt is a convincing reason that stops people from mourning; however, in many cases, people cannot mourn not because they hate the dead person, but because they identify themselves too much with the dead person. This identification is out of love. Yet, sometimes this love can be in excess and as a result, people lose their individuality. They cannot survive the death of the loved person because they lose self reliance and are unable to withdraw love. In Romeo and Juliet, the love of Romeo is passionate, yet immature. Every time he falls in love, his whole heart is occupied by the passion; he loses himself. At the beginning of the play, Romeo confesses to Benvolio that he is having "sad hours" (1.2 158) because he is in love with Rosaline but being rejected. He sighs that "I have lost myself. I am not here./ This is not Romeo; he's some other where" (1.2 194-5). Yet, this devotion of passion is not a display of 'selfless' love; it only reveals his immature "doting" (2.3 82). It seems that Juliet has a better understanding of love than Romeo does; in the balcony scene, she assures Romeo about her committed love: "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,/ My love as deep. The more I give to thee/ The more I have, for both are infinite" (2.1 174-7). In her opinion, love is

never-ending. When Romeo falls in love with Juliet at the first sight, he is attracted by Juliet's beauty and attaches himself wholly to her. He compares Juliet with "the sun" (2.1 45) and a "bright angel" (2.1 68), and almost deifies Juliet as his Goddess. He devotes himself entirely to Juliet. Though he professes his love with clichés and too readily, as the play goes on, his persistence in keeping the commitment with Juliet does honour to their love. Nonetheless, this noble but reckless love does not facilitate Romeo in facing Juliet's death. When the young lover Romeo hears the death of Juliet, a suicidal idea swiftly slips into "the thought of [this] desperate man" (4.4 36) as a means to reunite with her. Unlike Viola who can sublimate her love towards her lost brother in order to live on, Romeo almost collapses at the death of his lover. His mind is only occupied with death; his excess love and identification with Juliet disable him from mourning effectively. The problem of over-identification and lack of individuality especially affects the young, since they have not developed independent personalities yet and thus are more vulnerable to failed mourning.

Romeo's example shows the over-identification with the dead beloved results in a helpless weakness; yet it is also possible that the over-attachment to the dead results in a paralysis of rationality and excess

violence. These mourners desire to punish those who are responsible for having killed their beloveds. At the end of Henry VI Part II, Clifford vows a horrible revenge when he finds his father dead on the battlefield killed by York. He swears to revenge and kill the whole family of York, and "will not have to do with pity" (5.3 56). Conversion of grief into anger is already seen in Macduff's example. However, the violent transformation into a rabid revenge of Clifford is undesired and is even evil. Macduff's revenge has more to do with restoring the peace of his country but Clifford's revenge only aims at venting his "flaming wrath" (5.3 55), hatred and shame. Clifford laments that his father "does not lose thy youth in peace" but "die in ruffian battle" (5.3 46, 49) when he should be in "thy reverence and thy chair-days" (5.3 48). Clifford grieves without a tear but with his heart "turned to stone" (5.3 50). He swears that "York not our old men spares;/ No more will I their babes". His attachment to his father, together with his evil nature, prevents him from mourning tenderly and sensitively; he loses all his reason and conscience. Therefore, in Henry VI Part III, when Clifford captures the youngest son of York, Rutland, he stabs the innocent boy to death mercilessly despite his pleading. Clifford is so pitiless as to say that Rutland and his brothers' lives "were not revenge sufficient for me./ No—if I digged up thy forefathers'

graves,/ And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,/ It could not slake mine ire nor ease my heart" (1.4 27-30). His violence and lack of a heart is appalling. It seems that Clifford's hatred does not merely come from his love and grief for his dead father, but also results from the hurt of honour and dignity for having the father killed. Moreover, when Clifford deems securing his father's life as an honour, revenge becomes the ultimate and only channel to deliver his hatred and wipe out his shame.

For both Clifford and Romeo, extreme attachment to another person makes them unable to deal with the loss of that person in a rational way. A somewhat different, but related, phenomenon is the inability of some people to fail to mourn effectively when their beloved dies -- not because they over-identify with the lost person but because they are excessively attached to some internal quality embedded in him. Constance in King John exemplifies this condition. She is enamoured of her son, Arthur, in such a way that she sees him as an extension of herself. Compared to Clifford, Constance seems to be less evil but more helpless when she loses her son, Arthur, and the hope she has for him. Constance loves her only son and strives to obtain the throne for him from King John. But, perhaps, she loves Arthur as her achievement and power more than himself as a person. She

demonstrates a higher degree of concern for obtaining the kingship than caring about Arthur's feelings. When Eleanor attempts to lure Arthur away from the French and thus his alliance, Constance ironically 'encourages' him to do so:

Queen Eleanor (to Arthur): Come to thy grandam, child.

Constance (to Arthur) : Do, child, go to it grandam, child.
Give grandam kingdom, and grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig.
There's a good grandam. (2.1 159-63)

Being a politically, physically and psychologically weak child, Arthur needs protection and is dependent on his mother. However, although Constance's mockery emerges out of anger and targets the Queen, her ironic words hurt Arthur. The docile Arthur weeps and wishes that "I were low laid in my grave./ I am not worth this coil that's made for me" (2.1 164-5). He would rather not be the subject of argument. Yet Constance persists in arguing with the Queen and charges that the Queen is an adulteress who has given birth to a Bastard son who has obtained the throne illegitimately. Constance focuses on the throne. Later when Constance gets the news that King Philip approves of a royal intermarriage between England and France, and France can get the

land, which should be held by Arthur originally, as dowry, she is "full of fears" (2.2 13) and "sorrow" (2.2 29). She exclaims that Arthur has lost his status and laments "what becomes of me?" (2.2 35) She is concerned only about the kingship. She over-identifies herself with the importance of getting the throne; thus when Arthur dies, she is disillusioned. Unlike males, she is weak and not allowed to take revenge. Her grief is neither vented nor dealt with effectively. She keeps on talking about her grief but almost cannot accept her loss. Her disappointment is so great that she fails to digest it but is driven mad by it. As a messenger reports later: "Lady Constance in a frenzy died" (4.2 123).

The psychological logic displayed by Constance is perhaps even more interestingly depicted in the character of Lucrece in Shakespeare's The Rape of Lucrece (1593-4). Her case demonstrates how sometimes people cannot mourn when they lose an object that embeds a crucial internal quality which they identify themselves with. Usually, when people lose certain qualities or virtues within themselves, for example, earnestness or honesty, they are able to mourn for that loss and accept the change and move on. Yet, when the internal qualities are too essential, they cannot deal with its loss and fail to mourn for it. Therefore, after Lucrece is raped by Tarquinius, she

commits suicide. Lucrece is chaste and she values this virtue. Chastity is so important to Lucrece that she identifies her entire character with it. Chastity and Lucrece are equalized in this tragic heroine's belief. However, although Lucrece endeavours to maintain and treasure her chastity, this moral quality attracts the lustful prince Tarquinius to rape her violently. Lucrece "hath lost a dearer thing than life" (687): her chastity as well as her honour. She laments that she "alone must sit and pine,/ Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine,/ Mingle my talk with tears, my grief with groans,/ Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans" (795-8). Her sorrow is overwhelming; she feels desperate at her passivity. Lucrece expresses her grief but she cannot accept herself upon losing her chastity. If mourning is a renewal process, she fails mourning. Lucrece declares that "my honour I'll bequeath unto the knife/ That wounds my body so dishonoured./ 'Tis honour to deprive dishonoured life;/ The one will live, the other being dead" (1184-7). Lucrece chooses to commit suicide, after revealing the hideous and shameful rape to her husband, in order to preserve her sense of honour, as she cannot overcome her sense of shame.

In bereavement, perhaps the most important thing is for the bereft to think about how to overcome grief and thus survive the death of their

beloveds. Yet, repressing the grief or over-identifying with the death becomes the two extremes in the work of mourning that destine a failed mourning for the bereft. Such failed mourning has negative consequences. People may commit suicide, like Romeo and Lucrece, or go mad, like Lady Macbeth and Constance. The most famous tragedy Hamlet actually contains all these extremes of mourning. It epitomizes failed mourning in the plot and realizes the causes and effects in its characters

A Mourning Play

Hamlet is not a mere tragedy showing the death of characters, more importantly, it shows many examples of people who cannot mourn and the bad consequences thereof. Richard McCoy (2001) writes that there are four funerals in Hamlet: "the first for Hamlet's father… the 'hugger-mugger' (4.5 82) burial of Polonius, Ophelia's abbreviated obsequies, and finally the somewhat incongruous soldier's funeral for Hamlet himself" (122). Death and funeral are followed with grief and mourning. Hamlet is a mourning play. It starts with the soldiers telling Horatio about the appearance of an apparition who is "In the same figure like the king that's dead" (1.1 41). The atmosphere portrayed is dark and hazy, which echoes the internal trappings of Hamlet by grief. Death usually occurs at the climax of plays, yet this element is the basis

for the exposition of Hamlet. Mourning and revenge are the composition. This revenge tragedy does not present mourning as the 'privilege' of Hamlet alone; it also explores and demonstrates the mourning of other bereaved characters including Ophelia, Claudius and Laertes. Like many examples discussed above, these characters actually suffer from different degrees of failed mourning.

The over-dependence of Ophelia on her father causes her to fail at reducing the grief in bereavement. Ophelia is like Romeo in terms of their immature reliance on others. Romeo is too much attached to Juliet while Ophelia is overly reliant on her father. For example, Ophelia is like a little girl reporting the details of Hamlet's affection and deeds to her as if she herself does not have the ability to deal with her own love affair. She listens to Polonius' lecturing about how Hamlet's deceivable "affection" and "tenders" (1.3 101,103) are untrustworthy and answers "I shall obey, my lord" (1.3 136). We can also notice that Ophelia receives Laertes' similar advice almost in the same way, only she is a bit bolder with her brother, urging him to heed his own advice. But on the whole, Ophelia is submissive and she diminishes her will and judgment in front of her father and the other males who represent her father, especially the father's son and future family leader, Laertes. In

addition to Polonius' advice, Ophelia also seeks for his protection. When Ophelia is "affrighted" (2.1 75) by Hamlet's "ecstasy of love," (2.1 102) (as interpreted by Polonius) she comes to her father for consolation. This behaviour not only heightens Ophelia's meek and dependent personality; it also confirms that she has obeyed Polonius' "command" to "repel his letters and denied/ his access to me" (2.1 107, 108-9). Ophelia depends on her father so much that when Polonius dies, she loses the source of judgment and strength. She cannot handle the grief of bereavement. A gentleman comments on her condition that "She speaks much of her father,/ Spurn enviously at Straws, speaks things in doubt/ That carry but half sense" (4.5 3-7). However, this resulting weakness of Ophelia seems to be asserted and forced by her father. Ophelia actually has her strength for analysing Hamlet's behaviours and her desirability as a partner by a male, like Hamlet. Yet, these qualities are repressed by Polonius. Polonius, in other words, does not let Ophelia grow and develop her capability to be an individual, which results in her failed mourning and subsequent madness.

Ophelia's weakness fails her in mourning; yet neither can her brother, Laertes, who has a much stronger character, overcome grief effectively in bereavement. Unlike Ophelia, Laertes is masculine and independent. Upon

the news of the death of his father, he resolutely vows revenge. Laertes does not allow "that drop of blood that's calm" (4.5 117) to overwhelm him as it is an insult to both his father and himself. His desire for revenge is so strong that he forsakes his "conscience and grace" (4.5 132) in order "to be revenged/ Most thoroughly for my father" (4.5 135-6): "To hell allegiance, vows to the blackest devil,/ Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit!/ I dare damnation" (4.5 131-3). His determination to get revenge enables him to be blasphemous "to cut his [Hamlet's] throat i' th' church!" (4.7 126). Laertes' fury and shame are similar to those of Clifford. Both of their fathers are killed by their enemies disgracefully; moreover, they not only regard the murder as a deprivation of their beloved but also as a dishonour to themselves. The over-emphasis on revenge takes up almost all of the energy and attention which Laertes would need for an effective mourning; yet, Laetres' conscience is not entirely consumed. At one point in the duel, Laertes whispers that "it is almost against my conscience" (5.2 298) to hit Hamlet with the poisoned sword prepared by Claudius. Later, after he is slain by his own poisoned sword and is dying, Laetres addresses Hamlet to "Exchange forgiveness with me... /Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,/ Nor thine on me!"

(5.2 330-2). This late recognition acts as a recovery of his failed mourning, which slightly distinguishes him from the evil Clifford.

People may sympathize with Laertes' failed mourning and the resulting violent revenge which also dooms him to death; however, people may be less sympathetic towards Claudius, another strong character in Hamlet, since his evil is *consistent* throughout the play and his psychological suffering is caused by himself. Laertes' seeking for Hamlet's forgiveness is the turning point of his attitude towards his father's death, as well as his evil as a person. However, a repenting determination is missing in Claudius. Like Macbeth and Brutus, who have killed the king in order to get the throne, Claudius cannot escape the same internal struggle initiated by his conscience. He cannot mourn for his brother because he represses the guilty feeling so as not to face his own evil. Claudius can hide his guilty feeling well and makes it unknown to others; yet it is not entirely invisible. For example, Claudius admonishes Hamlet to cease mourning. However, his guilt does not allow him to talk sincerely to Hamlet but only sound pretentious. Sometimes, this guilt can be provoked. Claudius "rises" and cries out for "light" (3.2 271, 275) "upon the talk of poisoning" (3.2 295) in *The Mousetrap*, the play within the play arranged by Hamlet deliberately to detect any signs of his guilt.

Claudius indeed is suffering from his repressed guilt which presents him from repenting to God; he admits that "Pray can I not... My strong guilt defeats my strong intent" (3.3 38, 40). Even though he does pray, he has not truly repented and of course is not yet redeemed. Claudius knows that "My words fly up, my thought remain below./ Words without thoughts never to heaven go" (3.3 97-8). His failure to face and deal with his sins remains until the end of the play. Claudius' wickedness far outweighs his conscience, and thus he is almost comfortable with his lack of mourning for his dead brother.

Hamlet is the most widely discussed character of Shakespeare. However, this popularity does not exempt him from the discussion in this chapter, especially in terms of this failed mourning section. The death of Hamlet's father is previous to the beginning of the play. Before the revelation of the murdering of the king by the ghost, Hamlet's grief is manifested in silence and sulky appearance. At most he discloses his thoughts only in his monologue (1.2) in which we learn about his sorrow on the king's death and (at greater length) his sadness and annoyance about Queen Gertrude's hasty remarriage. When the play develops, we can see that his grief indeed grows and troubles his mind more seriously. Generally speaking, Hamlet undergoes two stages of mourning which can be represented by Ophelia and Laertes

respectively. More significantly, Hamlet does not manage to overcome his grief and regain himself in the mourning in either stage.

In the first stage, helplessness is developed in the bereaved Hamlet which resembles that of Ophelia. His helplessness derives from melancholia which involves self-reproaches in addition to the normal and expected depressive emotion. In Hamlet's lamentation, a sense of self-debasement can be detected. For example, in his first monologue, he grieves about how the new king, Claudius, is no more in comparison to his father, "Than I to Hercules" (1.2 153). It is not necessary for Hamlet to lower himself in order to criticize Claudius. Nonetheless, self-reproaches are persistently found in Hamlet. He curses himself with all kinds of vulgarity because he is disappointed with himself for being unable to mourn affectionately, as a player can do on the ground of fiction and imagination. He wonders if the player "would drown the stage with tears" (2.2 572) and do some vigorous acts, most probably of revenge, if he had "the motive and the cue for passion/ That I [Hamlet] have" (2.2 570-1). He is dissatisfied with his lack of emotional involvement and inaction. So, it seems that the cause of grief of Hamlet and Ophelia is different; yet the manifested weakness and helplessness are similar.

Freud suggests that Hamlet's melancholia does not result from the death of his father but from an unconscious and unresolved conflict with him. In The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), Freud writes that "Hamlet is able to do anything—except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took his father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized" (265). Therefore, Hamlet's reproaches may imply and represent the reproaches against his dead father. Freud suggests that "self-reproaches are reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted away from it on to the patient's own ego" (p.42). This interpretation suggests that Hamlet's hatred to his father disables him from mourning effectively. In other words, Ophelia fails mourning because she is over-attached to her father out of reliance; but Hamlet fails out of the unsolved conflicts between father and son.

Failed mourning lead both Ophelia and Hamlet to undesirable consequences. As seen in the discussion of Ophelia, she goes mad as she fails to withdraw herself from her dead father. But for Hamlet, a suicidal thought sprouts in his mind. He desires that his "too too sullied flesh would melt,/ Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew" (1.2 129-30). The internal struggle of his existence keeps troubling Hamlet. In his famous "to be or not to be

speech," (3.1) he debates with himself whether he should suffer quietly or resist by ending his life. Death is attractive because "by a sleep to say we end/ The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks/ That flesh is heir to" (3.1 61-3). Yet his "conscience" (3.1 83) makes him a "coward" (3.1 83) and he withdraws the suicide idea. His self-consciousness tells him of "the dread of something after death" (3.1 78). The uncertainty after death "makes us rather bear those ills we have/ Than fly to others that we know not of" (3.1 81-2). Hamlet hangs back from the possible cost of suicide—eternal damnation. Contradictorily, Hamlet cannot accept himself as behaving in a woman-like fashion rather than adopting the mourning approach that men usually do: converting his anger and grief into a passion of revenge. Interestingly, his self-consciousness, on one hand, doubly hinders him and makes him, we can say, both especially masculine and especially feminine. Like a woman, he can neither deliver himself of his emotion nor conquer his mourning. Yet, at the same time, his consciousness spurs him to revenge in order to discharge his grief like a man and fulfil his duty as a bereaved son, which is the second stage of his mourning.

In the second stage, Hamlet's determination to gain revenge grows and he becomes even more desperately masculine. When Hamlet confirms

the guilt of Claudius by observing his reaction after watching "something like the murder of my father," (2.2 607) he is assured that his revenge will be justified. However, although Hamlet gets a good opportunity to kill Claudius, he gives it up because at that time Claudius is praying. Hamlet denies that he would be "revenged,/ To take him in the purging of his soul,/ When he is fit and seasoned for his passage" (3.3 84-6). Hamlet aims at the eternal damnation of Claudius; this thought is evil. Hamlet's revenge mentality as well as his conscience is like that of Laertes'. Although Hamlet's desire for revenge is strong and he thinks Claudius deserves punishment, he is not blindly violent or generally cruel. He confesses to Horatio that "But I am very sorry… / That to Laertes I forgot myself,/ For by the image of my cause I see/ The portraiture of his. I'll court his favours." (5.2 75-8). Hamlet is empathetic with Laertes who acts as a mirror reflecting their same cause of revenge—the death of their fathers. However, perhaps Hamlet himself also recognizes that his mourning and revenge are incompatible. As Swiss and Kent (2002) write, "Hamlet suffers a series of bereavements, and he never recovers from one before another occurs. These successive sorrows (his father's death, his mother's rapid marriage, his mistaken killing of Polonius, his parting with Ophelia and her later suicide) cumulatively ensure that he is unable to

escape his grief-stricken state" (3). When he is in deep mourning, he cannot act; when he can act, he has lost his grief but replaced it with an anger derived from somewhere other than bereavement.

Failed mourning is prevalent and the 'mainstream' in Hamlet. We might even say that Shakespeare brings several characters who fail at mourning (Ophelia, Laertes, and Claudius) into the play in order to show how difficult mourning is even for a man as intelligent as Hamlet. Yet successful mourning can also be found in this play, in a minor character, Horatio. When Horatio sees his friend, Hamlet, as well as the whole royal family die, he says that "I am more an antique Roman than a Dane./ Here's yet some liquor left" (5.2 342-3). He would like to end his life in a Roman fashion to show his masculine mode of grief: honour and respect to his country, as well as his loyalty to his fellow, Hamlet. Yet Hamlet urges him not to commit suicide but to stay alive to tell his story. Losing his friend and his country, Horatio is filled with grief. Yet he is able to embed the passion aroused in the mission of living on. Horatio does not use tears to deliver himself of his grief; instead he uses his role of witness to the tragedy of the Danish royal family to overcome his sorrow. He will "speak to th' yet unknowing world/ How these things came about" (5.2 380-1). Horatio's mourning is successful, it seems; however, as a

minor character, Horatio's mourning sets an ironic and contrastive example to the other examples of failed mourning in Hamlet, which heightens the tragic sense and highlights the failed mourning of the play.

Conclusion

In bereavement, people not only lose their beloveds, but also their sense of meaning of life. When we say mourning is an empowerment, we know that the mourners do not directly gain additional power in the process or cause the dead person to revive through their mourning; yet in a subtle way, the mourners re-gain the energy and strength that they lose in facing the shock, horror and grief of the death of their beloveds. It is a compensating and reconstructing process for those in bereavement to recuperate their whole beings—a way of surviving death. Failed mourning is a deprivation of the restoration of normalcy of an individual upon the deprivation of his beloved person by death. As seen from this chapter, this *double loss* does not happen overnight. It is an accumulative result of distorted attitudes towards the dead person without remedy before they pass away. Surviving death does not take place in an instant.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The struggle between the control of loss and the loss of control is also staged through two temporal patterns, repetition and the inexorable drive towards more devastating losses.

(~ Heather Dubrow 1999:200)

Up to this point, we still have not discussed one very important example of Shakespearean mourning: King Lear (1605-6). It is surprising to see how Lear behaves in his mourning. While Ophelia and Constance go mad in bereavement (as seen in Chapter Four), Lear is 'empowered' upon the death of his daughter: he regains his reason. Interestingly the mad King regains his rationality in mourning, but ironically his great mourning also appears to lead to his death. For example, he is able to recognize Kent in disguise, which is not the case when he is mad. Yet, perhaps this 'empowerment' does more harm to Lear as he is now even more conscious of his loss and pain of Cordelia's death. The regret at his foolish pliability and its indirect result of the death of his daughter constitute Lear's heart-stricken grief. He wishes the revival of Cordelia so as to "redeem all sorrows/ That

ever I have felt" (5.3 265-6). At the end he dies of joy in the hallucination thinking his daughter is alive. The mourning of King Lear may be a failed one or not; but it is actually not necessary to categorize it, since the example of King Lear simply affirms and echoes the lack of rules of mourning in bereavement.

Dubrow (1999) titles the concluding chapter of her book Shakespeare and Domestic Loss as "The Art of Losing". To borrow the literal implication here, Shakespeare does present death, grief and mourning with literary aesthetics; it is an art. In addition, dealing with the loss of someone beloved is also an art: the effective attitudes, skills and strategies of facing the grief and mourning of losing. The art of losing, in a positive understanding, beautifies death, grief and the whole experience of mourning; negatively understood, however, the deliberate diminishing of the horror of loss rebounds and leaves a sense of artificiality and deceit.

Schoenfeldt (2004) writes in "'Commotion Strange': Passion in Paradise Lost" that "after the fall, passion becomes both the locus of mortal suffering and the medium of redemption" (64). The exile from Eden does not only deprive Adam and Eve of a piece of eternal fertile land; most crucially, it withdraws immortality from them and ever since, humans have had the

experience of suffering and grief, without an end. Passion is a paradox. On one hand, it is in every human's heart and gives the experience of joy and satisfaction because it enables people to love and to be loved; on the other hand, this passion also causes people suffering because it makes people feel extreme grief when we lose the beloveds.

While death is part of the natural life cycle of human beings, it is an interesting though painful fact that the 'inborn' passion and consequent grief of loss in bereavement also establishes mourning as part of the life cycle and parallel to death. Yet, though we know death and the feeling of pain at bereavement, we do not forsake relationships and emotional bonding owing to this predictable grief. This conflict cannot be resolved by social efforts by endowing appropriateness and restraints in mourning, as Shakespeare has demonstrated with his characters in bereavement. However, mourning can neither be ignored nor concealed. The power of failed mourning can destroy a person. Perhaps the conflict is a sacrifice in life that no one can explain; at best, it can be presented, as Shakespeare does, to show the significance of the order and balance of emotion in life.

Life is life. There is not a word or metaphor that can fully describe the uniqueness of life. Shakespeare does try to expound life through his diversified

characters, which are vivid; yet, life can never be presented completely and thoroughly. People may expect the great playwright Shakespeare to have left some penetrating and incisive comments about life and death on his epitaph; but they may be disappointed:

Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear

To dig the dust enclosed here:

Blest be the man who spares these stones

And curst be he that moves my bones.

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